

THE 12. 11. 33
General Assembly :
OR, A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
Gathering of all SAINTS to
CHRIST.

WHEREIN

It appears that all SAINTS in all Places
and Ages, shall be at last gathered to-
gether to CHRIST their Head.

TOGETHER

With the Time, Manner, Ends and Reasons
of this last Great Congregating of all
SAINTS, and what use may be made
thereof.

BEING

Some MEDITATIONS upon
2 Theß. II. 1.

By O. H. Minister of the G O S P E L.

Melch. Adam in vit Joan. Jacob Grynæi, Pag. 877.

*O præclarum illum diem cum ad illud animorum concilium ca-
lumq; proficiscar : Et cum ex hac turbâ & collatione disce-
dam si enim Ethnicus (i. e. Seneca) ita sensit, cur nos
Christiani eodem animo non simus.*

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TO THE
Christian Reader.

NEXT to the immediate Enjoyment of God (which is the Top and Height of a Gracious Souls felicity) it is no doubt an adventitious Comfort to the Children of God , that they shall meet with all the Holy Souls in Heaven, of whom they have heard, and with whom they have enjoyed sweet Communion in this lower World : What a ravishing Transport of Love was there reciprocally betwixt loving Jonathan and his beloved David , in their mutual Embraces when they kissed one another , and wept one with another, until David exceeded, 1 Sam. 20. 41. Who can read that Passage with dry Eyes ! But oh, what raptures of transcendent Joy will these Holy Souls be filled with, upon their meeting in Heaven ! Where briny Tears shall be wiped from their weeping Eyes, and Sin and Sorrow shall

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flee away ! Such joy would break their Hearts and kill them (as the Father died for joy on his two Sons coming off Victors in the Olympick Games) did not Almighty grace enlarge their Vessels to a vast Extent : When they told Jacob that Joseph was

yet alive, Jacob's heart fainted,
Gen. 45. 26, for he believed them not, but
27. when he saw the Wagons sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived:

Ob but what full demonstrations both of the certainty and excellency of our godly Friends felicity be in Glory ! No hesitation remains either it be so, no bitter ingredients to allay this joy : How will these pure streams mingle and recur with ravishment to all Eternity ! The once tender-hearted Mother, will turn

her desires into delight, and say, what
Pro. 31. 2. my Son ! and what, the Son of my womb ! and what, the Son

of my vows ! Thou art welcome hither, now my sad Agonies are turned into triumphant Songs : What sweet solace will the godly Husband and gracious Wife take in each other ! Once heirs

together of the grace of life, now full possessours of the life of glory : The godly Christian Friends that

walked to the house of God in company, and took sweet counsel together, are now abundantly

satisfied with the fatness of God's house, and drink of the rivers of pleasures, yea bask themselves in this ocean of delights : Surely it will be no small accession of their

joy

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joy to meet their old Friends, Relations and Companions there, never to part more: If Archimedes was so transported with finding out a Mathematical Conclusion, that he cryed out [εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα] I have found, I have found it, much more will the glorified Saint be exceedingly ravished, when after all his Pains and Fears, he can say, I have found my beloved, and all my Christian Friends beset the Throne; Ob happy day, Ob ravishing sight! To behold the Sun of righteousness in all his Glory, and those radiant Stars glittering in that upper Firmament; this indeed will surprize the Soul with astonishment: The reading of the incomparable Writings of Eminent Ministers, hath been often a great refreshment to studious and serious Souls: Heynsius, the learned Library keeper of Leyden, professed, that when he had shut up himself among so many illustrious Souls, he seemed to sit down there as in the very lap of Eternity, and pittied Rich Worldlings that were strangers to his delights. Ob but what brave Souls are the Spirits of just Men made perfect! What pleasure will they take in the graces and happiness of each other! If David could say of Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was 2 Sam. 1. 26. wonderful passing the love of Women: O what love and delight will be above in the proper Element of Love! Where Souls will be filled with God, and delight in his Image shining in all the Saints.

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It is certain, that all the real Saints that ever died since the World began, are taken up into Heaven and enjoy God and each other ; but whether the Saints departed or Angels, were participants of that
Dr. Owens Glory before which they have since
Christolog. v. Christ's Ascension into Heaven, is
158. doubted by some, yea the contrary as-

serted, which I dispute not ; nay, I am apt to think, every glorified Soul, loosed from the Flesh, will be some addition to the Joy of the glorified above : O what acclamations of joy will every Soul landing safely in Glory cause, to Cœlestial Inhabitants ! Well met, Brethren, after a tedious, dangerous Voyage, in this Haven of Rest : Glad, full glad are we that you are got safe into Abraham's bosom : And whether the Saints successively going off the stage of this World, inform them above of the State of the Church below ? I have not to say : But as there is no Grief there, or occasions of Sorrow, so there is multitudes of objects and occasions of Joy and Triumph, the felicitating object, the place, the company, the duration ; all afford matter of Comfort : And why may we not think their Reflection upon their former State in this lower World, will contribute something to their Refreshment ! Yea, and their communicating Experiences one to another in that blessed State : If any one doubt, whether glorified Souls will have such mutual, intelligible Entercourses with each other, for Satisfaction herein, let them read the excellent Discourse of precious Mr. John Flavil, called *Ἐνθύματολογία*, or a Treatise of the Soul of Man from
Page

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Page 274 to 281, wherein you'll find the Objection answered of their wanting the Organs and instruments of Speech and Hearing. " Surely (he saith) the
 " Spirits of just Men are not mutes, such an August
 " Assembly of holy and excellent Spirits, do not
 " live together in their Fathers House, without mutual
 " Converse and Fellowship with each other as
 " well as with God: The great Question is, how
 this Discourse is managed, and he affirms out of Zanchy,
 " that is but a turning the key of the Will,
 " and their Thoughts and Desires are presently seen.
 " and known by others to whom they will discover
 " them, as a Man's Face is seen in a Glass, when
 " he pleaseth to turn his Face to it: Would one Spirit
 " make known his Mind to another, it is but to
 " Will he should know it, and it is immediately
 " known: And this internal way of speaking, is
 " more noble, perfect and excellent then by Words
 " and Signs, both in respect of clearness, and also
 " of dispatch and speed: See both cleared, ubi Supra, p. 280.

This is the Language of Spirits (called the Tongue of Angels, 1 Cor. 13. 1.) but after the Resurrection when bodies are united to Souls, possibly there may be the use of bodily Organs, howbeit in a more excellent way then now they can: Yet in the glorified State the joy of the Soul shall redound to the Body; so that some Weems think there will be no use of the baser Sences but only of the noble Sences, as Seeing and Hearing: The best pleasure is, that of

p. 202.

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the Souls spiritual delights, are far more pleasant then sensual; immediately after a gracious Soul is parted from the Body, it attains to that perfection of Knowledge with more ease then it could attain to a small degree of Knowledge whilst in the Body: Yet its questioned whether the glorified Soul shall be in a proficiency of Knowledge, which yet will be an addition to its Happiness: For, the Soul being a Finite Being, cannot attain to a comprehensive Knowledge of God, but what they enjoy will be beatifical: O what an emphasis is in that Word, seeing God face to face, and seeing him as he is; who can now tell what it means? Its true the Saints happiness lies in being ever with the Lord, and God's being all in all to them: But this mutual Delight in one another will be a blessed Circumstance of their Felicity.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

1 John, 3. 2.

1 Thes. 4. 17.

1 Cor. 15. 20.

Whilst I was musing on the great Number of precious Souls breathing their last, Ministers and Christians, formerly and lately, known and unknown, whom I shall never see any more in this World, I begun to contemplate what's become of them, surely they are not lost but laid up, when shall we meet again? Where shall we meet? In what Place or Condition? I am assured by Divine Revelation, that the Souls of Believers do immediately pass into Glory, and as our Lord saith to the penitent dying Thief, to day shalt thou be with

Luke 23. 43.

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with me in Paradise, so he saith
of the Soul of Lazarus, that he Luke 16. 22.
was carried by the Angels into A-
brabam's bosom; there only Saints are, there all
the Saints are, 'tis a Place and State proper to Saints
only, yet common to all the Saints, not one excluded,
we need not fear want of good Company, yet, it is
not the company of fellow Saints that will make us
happy, for as one saith, Though " the Strings receive
" not their sound and vertues from each other, yet
" their concurrence causeth that Har-
" mony which could not be by one a- Mr. Baxters
" lone; for all the lines may be drawn Saints Bost,
" from the center, and not from each Part I. p. 97.
" other, and yet their Collocation

" make them more comely then one alone could be:
But in this, caution is necessary, that we give Christ
his Prerogative, and ascribe not too much to Man, to
expect that from them that's not in them; Survivers
are too prone to this Idolatry, as Popery testifies:
But in Heaven our Affections will be regular, God
will have his due, and Saints theirs; we shall be-
hold God in his Saints: All the glory will redound
to God in what God's Children have been and then
are; when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints,
and to be admired in all them
that believe in that day. Ob 2 Thef. 1. 10.
what an happy, honourable, trium-
phant Assembly will that be! The contemplation I
have had of this Day and State, hath extorted from
me these Meditations; which have been very de-
lightful to me in transcribing, and I shall pray that
they

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*they may be profitable to the Reader, and that we
may land safe in that blessed Haven, where so
many of our godly Friends and Relations are arri-
ved, that we may rejoyce and sing together the
Song of Moses and the Lamb for ever more:
Which is the prayer and care of*

Sept. 22. 1698.

thy faithful Friend

and Monitor, O. H.

2 T H E S. II. 1.

Now we beseech you, brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.

C H A P. I.

The Context cleared, the Text opened, Doctrine raised.

TH A T Jesus Christ will come down from Heaven to Judge the World, is an Article of our Faith, commonly believed among professed Christians: But there have been useless, endless Disputes about the Time of his Coming; but one would think, what our Lord saith in *Matb. 24. 36.* should silence Men's curious and presumptuous Assertions concerning this Secret, for he saith, *thereof*

thereof that day and hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only: No nor Christ himself as Man : No say they, the Day and Hour cannot be known but the Year may : But that's a poor Evasion, for by day and hour is meant the Time ; and if Christ know not, no wonder if he foretold it not to his Disciples, for wise Reasons, that we might be always ready : *Grotius* indeed saith, that *Paul* thought the coming of Christ would be in his days, yet you see here, that it would not be till certain Signs foretold should come to pass, and after that, they were still to expect it as uncertain : Ignorance of it is needful, but error about it is hurtful ; let us study what tends to Practice.

In this Text the blessed Apostle doth vehemently beseech them by all that is dear unto them, that no pretence either of Spirit, Word or Apostolical Letter, do perswade them that Christs coming is near at hand, and so torment their Minds or stagger their Faith when they find it otherwise : What those preceding Signs are, see *Baxter's* Paraphrase on this Chapter, those that can let them consult it.

All that I shall do is, to take notice of this solemn obsecration or obtestation in this Text, wherein he adjures them :

1. By the coming of our Lord.
2. By our gathering together unto him.

It is a sacred and solemn Oath, like that in
 1 Cor. 15. 31. *I protest by your rejoicing which I
 have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily*: So here,
 it is as if he should say, as you have an high
 and honourable Esteem of Jesus Christ himself,
 and as you have a great esteem of, and make
 due preparation for the coming of Christ, by
 which he will gather us all to himself, and re-
 ally perfect the Unity of his Body, both which
 are represented as proper objects of Faith,
 which we admire and expect, and highly
 esteem. I do again beseech you by these, be
 not too credulous of Men's predictions, who
 state that day to this or that time as they fancy;
 sometimes preposterously hastening it, other
 whiles procrastinating it, to a vast dimention:
 I must tell you, saith *Paul*, these conceits are
 scattered by Satan's Artifice: And it becomes
 an [*exitiale commentum*] dangerous figment or
 invention of Men's Brains, for if it come not
 to pass, some languish in their Faith, others
 grow presumptuous in their Security: If the
 Devil prevail thus far, he will so work [*ut ni-
 bil in Religione certum aut fixam reliqueret*] that
 he will leave nothing sure or fixed in Matters
 of Religion, as *Calvin* saith on this Text; yea,
 by this means Men loosen the cords, and break
 the bands that join together the Articles of our
 Faith, yea, strike at the foundation Article of
 the Resurrection.

Doct. I.

Doct. I. *Ministers must be Beseechers.*

As they may command in their Masters name
so they must beseech as Servants

1 Thes. 5. 12. all the Faithful, 1 Thes. 4. 1. *We beseech you and exhort you:* [ἐρωτάμεν

we humbly and earnestly desire you, as if we went down on our knees to you; hence 1 Thes. 2. 7, 8. *We were gentle among you even as a Nurseries cherishes her Children:* Our business is great with sinners inexorable, we have great need to use the most obliging Terms, as though God did beseech Sinners by us, to pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 20.

Doct. II. *All God's Servants are Brethren.*

Be they high or low, rich or poor, the most eminent Apostle and meanest, yea, weakest believe they are Brethren, they have all one Father, God, our elder Brother Christ, one holy Spirit that animates them all, one Covenant of Grace to wrap them up in, one heavenly Inheritance that they are Heirs of; hence Col. 1. 2. *To the Saints and faithful Brethren in Christ:* O what an endearing Relation is this! Let us live up to it.

Doct. III. *Christ will certainly come to Judgment.*

It is certain this noble Man is gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, to reckon with his Servants, Luke 19.

12—27. Christ's coming to Judge the Jews, was [*Imago & Arrabo Adeptus ultimi*] the Image and earnest of his last coming; described in 1 Thes. 4. 15, 16, 17.

Doct. IV. *The coming of Christ is a most endearing Consideration to believers.*

This is to the Christian as the Harvest is to the Husband-man, James 5. 7, 8. *Be ye also patient saith he, stablish your Heart for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh: O what a glorious Morning will that day be, when the Sun of Righteousness will shine once again with help and healing in his Wings! Then let the heirs of glory lift up their heads, for the day of their Redemption draws nigh: Luke 21. 28.* You cannot intreat them by more strong and obliging Obtestations or Arguments.

Doct. V. *Though Christ's coming be stopt to the Saints and certain in it self, yet the Time is uncertain to us.*

Our Lord saith to his inquisitive Disciples, Acts. 1. 6, 7. *It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own Power; hence he saith, Mat. 24. 42, 44. Watch therefore, be ye also ready, for in such an hour as you think not; the Son of Man cometh: This is a Key that the wise God locks under his Girdle; he keeps this Secret [*inter arcana imperij*] among the Mysteries of this glorious Empire; let*

let tis be content with a learned Ignorance herein.

Doct. VI. Men's bold Comments upon dark Prophecies are apt to shake Men's minds :

If sudden approach be foretold and it prove not so, Men are tempted to believe nothing, though this is unreasonable that Men will not believe what God saith, because what Men say prove Falcities; but many confident Expositors will needs thrust their Comment into the Text: yet, a judicious Christian must distinguish, there may be great motions and commotions, yet, no immediate presages of a conclusion, *Mark 13. 7.*

Doct. VII. That at Christ's Second coming, there will be a great gathering together of Saints :

When all the Elect shall be gathered into one [*Ἐκκοινωνία*] an Aggregation or Congregation, a mighty solemn meeting, as here *Heb. 10. 25.*

Doct. VIII. The meeting of Believers shall be to Christ :

Ἐπ' αὐτὸν or *πρὸς αὐτὸν*, *James 2. 7.* which some interpret of free Liberty to meet to worship God in this World after their scatterings by Persecution, who were forbid by persecuting Emperours, but granted by *Constantines* Edicts, thus *Grotius*, *Hammond*—but this is forced, there

there is a greater Congregation then that at Christ's second coming.

But I pass these and pitch on this;

Doct. IX. *That at Christ's solemn coming, there will be a great gathering together of Saints to Christ's:*

The Apostle, *Heb. 12. 22, 23.* mentions an innumerable company of Angels, and a general Assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in Heaven: I shall say little of the Angels, though God hath by Christ united them to the mystical Body of Christ, the Church, so the Apostle tells us, *Eph. 1. 10.* *That he hath gathered together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him:* The Angels of themselves are but Creatures, and so changeable (so the word *Shinan* signifies, Mutable, ascribed to the Angels *Psal. 68. 17.*) but receive confirmation by Christ; though not reconciliation: So that now they cannot leave their Stations as did the Apostate Angels. But whether Angels stand by Christ's Mediation, or by God's Election (therefore called Elect Angels) I determine not. But I am now to treat of *Converted Souls*, that then shall be united in one Body; that will be a strange Amphitheatre, an astonishing Sight when all the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessours shall be brought forth into open view, and shall be advanced into those Cœlestial Mansions with highest Acclamations.

In discoursing upon this pleasant Subject, I shall open these *Seven* things,

1. What this gathering alludes to.
 2. After what manner they are gathered.
 3. What is imply'd in this gathering.
 4. For what End they are gathered.
 5. How they are gathered to Christ.
 6. Why will God thus gather them.
 7. What improvement may be made of it.
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C H A P. II.

What's meant by this gathering together,

1. *What it alludes to,* 2. *How it is managed, and when transacted.*

1. **I** Shall briefly explain the Emphasis of this Word, what it signifies, and the Allusions to something in common view.

1. It alludes to an Hospitable Persons taking in Wanderers to lodge them, and kindly entertain them : So the Word is used, Mat. 25. 35. *I was a stranger and he took me in* [ξένος ἦμιν καὶ συνέλαβέ με] *ye gathered me* : Alas, God's Children are Strangers and Pilgrims in the Path, Heb. 11. 13. as Men oft cast them out, and they wander about in Sheep-skins and Goats-skins, in Deserts, Mountains, Dens and Caves of the Earth,

v. 37, 38. but their loving Father takes them in and provides them House and Harbour, *an house not made with hands eternal in the Heavens*; Lazarus at the rich Man's Gates is taken up into Abraham's bosom, a better lodging then the rich Man's stateliest Chamber, thus God gathers them.

2. It alludes to a Man's gathering a rich Treasure together, Gold, Silver, precious Stones, as David gathered a prodigious Treasure for building the Temple, *three thousand talents of gold, seven thousand talents of refined silver, all manner of precious stones*, 1 Chron. 29. 2, 4. Solomon gathered silver and gold, and the peculiar treasures of King's: But what are all these to God's treasure? Which too calls his peculiar treasure, more worth then both the Indies: These God hath his time and way to gather up, Mat. 3. 17. *They shall be mine saith the Lord in the day when I make up my jewels*: God's jewels lie loose and scattered, but he will string them, and lay them up safe with himself in Heaven.

3. This word alludes to congregating together, as in a Synagogue for Religious Acts [*caetus & conventus sacer*] an holy Religious meeting, *He hath built us a Synagogue*, that's for Religious worship, so the Hebrew word [עדה] imports

2 Cor. 5. 1.

Laying up in store, Isa. 39. 6.

Eccl. 2. 8.

Exod. 19. 5.

Luke 7. 5.

Acts 6. 9. a Religious meeting: And we read of a *Synagogue of the Libertines*, but this may be called the Synagogue or the Congregation of Licentiatees, or highest Graduates in Divinity, that have in some sense commenced *per Saltum*, and have leapt out of the Church below into the Church triumphant above, being highly preferred by their blessed Master.

4. The word imports a meeting in an honourable Council, that's above an ordinary Assembly, *Mat. 26. 3. Then assembled together the chief Priests, and Scribes and Elders, &c.* these were the Sanhedrim and sat as Judges upon causes Criminal and Capital [*συνάγωγα*] it signifies not a vulgar, or a common meeting, but a convention of States, to sit upon Life and Death; and though that was a wicked meeting to condemn the Son of God, yet this glorious Assembly of Saints shall be convened to be Assessors with Christ to judge their Judges, *1 Cor.*

6. 2. Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World, yea Angels:
Rev. 1. 6. Psalm 45. 16. All the Saints of God are Kings and Princes in all the Earth; Oh what an honourable Jury will there be to applaud the sacred Judicature of our Lord!

This is the meaning of the Word.

2. I must shew the manner, means and method, how this gathering together is managed, or how the Saints come to be gathered together, and when;

1. Con-

1. Converting Grace gathers Sinners out of the world to God: This is initial and preparatory; the word in Eph. 1. 10. *gathering together in one* [ἀνακαταλίσσειν] is very emphatical, it signifies to recapitulate, or recollect, or reduce all to an Head, it implies that mankind by Sin, is separated from God, disjointed one from another, the Members scattered; just like an old ruinous House that's fallen: All the pieces thereof are gone asunder, till the workman come and set them together, and rear up a stately Fabrick of the old Materials; Man hath not lost the faculties of his Soul by the fall, but the rectitude thereof: All the imaginations of Man's heart are become evil; He hath banish't himself from God, into a foreign Country: In a natural Sense, *God is not far from every one of us*: But in a moral Sense, God and unconverted Sinners are at a great distance, they are *far off, alienated from the life of God*, but Grace brings Sinners from their wanderings: The Spirit in the word unites them by a blessed cement in an efficacious manner, and that, *he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit*: And the Blood of Christ unites God and the Soul meritoriously: O blessed conjunction, Oh, happy meeting! God hath found out a

Gen. 6. 5.

Gen. 3. 8.

Luke 15.

Acts 17. 27.

Eph. 2. 13.

Chap. 4. 18.

1 Cor. 6. 17.

Eph. 2. 13, 22.

Isa. 56. 8.

Isa. 40. 11.

John 10. 16.

way in the Gospel to gather together the outcasts of Israel: Alas, we are all as Sheep going astray, but our Lord gathers the lambs into his armes, and brings them into fold, *Jews* and *Gentiles* make one fold: For, saith the Apostle Paul, ye are all the Children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. 3. 26. Faith makes a mystical Union, Love a Moral, Eph. 4. 15. But speaking the truth in love (or teaching it in love) may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ: Oh this, this is the foundation of all the rest; conversion is the first collection.

2. God gathers his Saints by Death to himself: Its said of Abraham, that he should be gathered to his Fathers in peace, Gen. 15. 15. and he was gathered to his people, Gen. 25. 8. Interpreters observe that this is usually applyed in Scripture to good Men, and it refers to the Soul, that they go to their godly progenitors, and because this is applied to Ishmael, therefore the *Jews* think he was a Penitent: But however, the Phrase is applyed most ordinarily to good Men, as Jacob, and of Aaron, of Moses, of Josiab; 'tis said, 2 Kings 22. 20. I will gather thee to thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace: Its true, he died in Battle, but in peace with God, and was translated into the everlasting peace with the Saints; this is the way

way of Divine Providence to carry his Children through a tempestuous Sea into an Haven of Rest; they shall not always be tormented with Satan's temptations, the Worlds oppositions, their own corruptions, but when they have done their work here in this wary World, *they shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness*, Isa. 57. 2. Oh blessed change, God gives them a *quietus est* from the Troubles of this wary Pilgrimage, *they rest from their labours*: their bodies *sleep in Jesus*, and are laid up safe in a quiet Repository, and their Souls do enter into Paradise, *i. e.* the third Heaven, the immediate presence of God: As Earth is the common Mother of all, so Heaven is the receptacle of all Believers.

Rev. 14. 13.

1 Thes. 4. 14.

Luke 23. 43.

3. God gathers them up out of their graves by the resurrection of their Bodies, and the reunion of their Souls to those self same Bodies: This was a Doctrine believed and well digested in the Old Testament, Job 19. 25, 26, 27. *Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; thy dead Men shall live saith Isaiah, ch. 26. 19. together with my dead body shall they arise*: The New Testament doth abundantly confirm this great Article of our Faith, John 5. 28, 29. 1 Cor. 15. Oh what an Army of Saints will start up out of the Earth! Their scattered bones and dust shall be reared up, and coagulated, and our Lord will bring

their glorified Souls along with him to sing out the high Praises of *Jehovah* : Roses die, sweetest Flowers perish, and the beauteous Complexion of the Earth turns to a bleak and withered hue in Winter, yet in Summer there is a kind of Resurrection : If you say in them, life is remaining in the Root and Seed, we say, the Soul is the root of the Body, and Christ the root of the Soul, and both are living, *Col. 3. 34.* and though there be no physical Contract, yet there is a relative Union betwixt Soul and Body, and a deep rooted love and inclination the Soul hath to it ; the silly Snail by its natural life and power, can make for it self an Habitation, yea

See Mr. Baxter of Self-denial, Page 206.

a Silk-worm becomes a winged Fly, the warmth of the Hen turns the Egg into a Chicken ; these : are Emblems of the Resurrection.

And what cannot the Power of God effect ? If a skilful work-man can turn a little earth and ashes into such curious transparent Glasses, why should we doubt whether the mighty Power of God can communicate a glorious perfection to the Flesh that's dissolved into its Elements ? *Luther* saith, I love the noble Art of Chymistry, it is such a brave Emblem of the Resurrection : O what a blessed ravishing sight will that be, to see the sanctified Soul united to the glorified Body, to receive their reward together ! This is the next.

4. By the same power of God some shall be changed, others raised from the dead, the Souls of the glorified Saints shall descend and be united to their own Bodies, and then ascend to meet the Lord in the Air, and the wicked are left behind on their dunghil the earth in fetters to receive their Sentence, and confined to their Prisons, this is that Myſtery, which poſſibly the bleſſed Apoſtle *Paul* heard from God when he was caught up into the third Heaven, and heard *unſpeakable words* [ἀρρητὰ ῥήματα] worldles words: This 2 Cor. 12. 4. is 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. *Behold I ſhew you a myſtery, we ſhall not all ſleep (i. e. die) but we ſhall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: This is further confirmed and explained in 1 Theſ. 4. 15. For this we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, ſhall not prevent them which are aſleep: And verſe 16. The dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, then we which are alive and remain, ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: Verſe 17. Calvin ſaith, he ſpeaks here of the Faithful only, the reſurrection of the Wicked,* Calvin in 1 Cor. 15. 5. *is a kind of change, though thy be not mentioned there; but of ſuch as ſhall bear the name of the heavenly or of Chriſt, verſe 49. 50. this is equivalent to Death, when there ſhall be an abolishing of the former Nature, and introducing a new one: This is a ſpecies*

species or kind of death, but as it is not a separation of Soul from the Body, so 'tis not a sleep, but it is a sudden transition from corruptible Nature into a blessed immortality: Here is the difference betwixt those that die and such as are changed, that the former put off the substance of the body, but they that are changed, put off nothing but the qualities of the body, the dead shall rise, before the living are rapt up: He sends the Clouds for Chariots, as *Joseph* his Wagons for *Jacob* and his Family: O what vast numbers will then mount up like a Cloud and darken the Heavens? This is in order to their congregating above.

5. The Angeles of God are sent to gather up the scattered Saints, Mat. 24. 31.

Mark 13. 27. And he shall send his Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his Elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other: Its true, some take this to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, but the most solid interpre-

1 Cor. 15. 52. ters apply it to this last Day: Paul saith, the trumpet shall sound, as of old, they called the Congregation of Israel together by the sound of a Trumpet: So now, the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trumpet of God, 1 Thes. 4. 16. I confess here are hard Points, which no mortal can resolve, as 1st. Concerning this Trumpet, what it is, Calvin saith [Relinquo alius subtilius differendum] leave to others

others to discourse subtilty of it : 2dly. What kind of shout this is, which is a kind of magnificent Acclamation to the Judge; and summoning all to appear, for the word in Greek [*ἐν καρδισματι*] doth also signify a Command: Alluding to Marriners or Souldiers summoned to be ready. 3dly. Who this Archangel is, and what Degrees there are among the Angels, (which School-men voluminously dispute,) or whether it be not Christ himself, because its said, *the dead that are in their graves shall hear his voice*, John 5. 28. and 4thly. Whether this shall be an oral shout or voice from the mouth of Christ, or only an expression of his Divine Power, I am not able to determine: But such a Summons there shall be, and all the Sons and Daughters of *Adam* shall appear, not one Person gentle or simple can skulk or hide themselves, the meanest shall not be lookt on as inconsiderable, and the most potent Princes are not at that day invincible: In vain shall the *Kings of the earth, great Men, rich Men, the chief Captains and mighty Men, bond and free hide themselves, or call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them*, Rev. 6. 15, 16. No, no, the Summons shall reach all, and all must obey and appear, whether they will or no; the mighty, Almighty God can fetch them out, his all-seeing Eye can spy them out: See the Summons, Psalm 50. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. *He shall call to the heavens from above and to the earth that he may judge his people:* These be words, *gather my Saints together, un-*

to me, those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice : O what a vast multitude will then ap-

pear ! Thousand , thousands Minister to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him : Yea, a great multitude which no Man

Rev. 7. 9. can number, of all nations, kindred and people, and tongues stand before the throne and the lamb, cloathed with white robes and palms in their hands : O what a glorious, celebrated, shining company of beautiful Persons will there be !

6. Yet further, these multitudes gathered together will have their Spirits perfectly united, they shall all speak one Language, as the whole earth did before the confusion at Babel : There will be an harmony of Minds, Wills, Affections, Consciences, conversations ; no clashing, no discord, they shall be fully united, cemented and perfectly joined together, and all to one Rule and Canon : They all conspire together in one celestial Song, the heavenly quire of Angels stand round about the Throne, ecchoing to that innumerable company of believing glorified Jews and Gentiles ; saying, Amen, blessing, honour and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving be unto our God for ever and ever Amen, Rev. 7. 10, 11, 12. Its worth observing, that upon Antichrists ruine, a great voice of much people in heaven saying Alleluja, Rev. 19. 1. And again they said Alleluja, v. 3. then again, the four and twenty Elders, and four Beatis, still eccho out the

the same tune *Alleluja*: The former were more private this publick, of the whole Congregation: But still upon a new Summons they add ever *Alleluja*, this was the *Hosanna Rabba* (as the Jews call it,) or an [*Hallelujatica victoria*] as old Britains called their Victory over the Saxons: All but faint Emblems of that great Solemnity, in which the multitudes of glorified Souls are of one heart and lip, unanimously adoring their Redeemer, acquiescing in his righteous Sentence [*nemine contradicente*] they neither contradict one another, nor the will of God: There is not a jarring String in this Musick: Whatever apprehensions or languages may be here; they all speak the same there: Yea, though they did not understand one anothers Dialect in this World, yet they shall all speak the Language of *Canaan*, whether it shall be *Hebrew* (as some conceive) who knows, but it will be intelligible by all that then meet together: The Text saith, *they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion*, Isa. 52. 8. Now if ever that Text shall be fulfilled; even as two Eyes look both on one Object, so the Eyes of all Saints shall be towards the Lord: There will be a sweet agreement in Principles, Practices, Professions, Affections, as the Primitive Christians that were of *one heart and of one soul*, Acts 4. 32. Then shall *we all come to the unity of the faith*, Eph. 4. 13.

7. These congregated Saints shall be admitted into one place, and state of Glory: They

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are before the throne of God , and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them, Rev. 7. 15. These bright Stars shall make a glorious Constellation in the heavenly orb : Though possibly one Star may differ from another Star in Glory, yet they shall all be irradiated with the Sun of Righteousness, according to their Capacities, though these vessels of grace be of various quantity ; yet they shall all be full in that vast ocean, not the weakest, feeblest, shall be lost or left behind, *the feeble among them shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them , Zech. 12. 8.* Not a

Psal. 56. 8.

Mat. 12. 42.

grace duty , not a mite given in charity shall be lost : Tears shall be here botled, and a cup of cold Water shall be rewarded, there is room enough in Heaven for all the Saints, *in my fathers house, saith he, are many mansions, John 14. 2.* Many for number, large for extension : That City is four square having twelve Gates, filled from all quarters of the

*Rev. 21. 10,
12, 25.*

World: *The gates of it continually open, never shut : O the stupendious vastness of that upper Region ! Earth is but a point, a small Pin-head compared to it ; though the Text in Revelations speak but of twelve thousand Furlongs, which according to some make but fifteen hundred Miles : But what is that to Heaven, if the City of the great King be meant there by the New Jerusalem as some think : But doubtless it*

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is exceeding spacious, if indeed it be a place circumscriptively taken ; but where the King is there is the Court, as the Angels do always behold the Face of God, and there.

fore are still in Heaven, though *Mat. 18. 10.*
imployed about Saints on Earth ; *Heb. 1. 14.*

so it may possibly be with the Saints after the Resurrection : Who knows whether the purified Earth may be one Place of their Cœlestial Happiness ; yet some think it will be wicked Men's Hell, and place of Torments : But be that as it may, we are sure there is room enough for all the Saints in Heaven ; and our Lord will have them all with him, not an hoof left behind as slighted, for he purchased all at a dear rate, prayed for them when he was leaving the World : An idea and sum of his present Intercession, we have in *John 17.* particularly *verse 24.* *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am :* This will be a blessed Congregation indeed, a spacious Temple, a large Paradise not in corners, houses, chappels, where they are crowded, and often persecuted, fined, imprisoned, here they have liberty, yea, possibly every Saint shall have his proper Mansion, yet in full communion with God, and the rest of glorified Spirits : But more of this hereafter.

Thus I have shewed how they are gathered:

C H A P III.

What is implied in this gathering together, what is included in it, and consequences of it.

3. **T**HE next Head to be opened is, to give a more particular account of this work of the Saints gathering together, and this I shall do in these *Seven* particulars.

1. That all the Saints in the several ages, places, conditions wherein they have lived, shall be gathered into one general Assembly, this may seem strange, but its true; all the Children of God that ever have lived this five thousand Years and upwards, since Man was placed on this earthly Globe, all that ever have lived, do live, or shall live till the end of time, shall be assembled, such as have lived in far distant places many thousand Miles asunder, by vast tracts of ground, mountains, seas, in *Europe, Asia, Africa and America*, such as have died many thousand Years ago, and have been long singing praises and enjoying God in the Church triumphant, Old Testament Saints, and New Testament Saints: The Children of God in the Church militant, yet fighting under

der the banner of Christ, shall meet with Victors that have been long crowned : Persons of all Conditions , Ages, Sexes, Qualities, Rich and Poor, Old and Young ; such as never saw each others Faces in this World, no, nor ever heard of each other , yet then they shall meet together, *Luke 13. 29. And they shall come from the East and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God :* Its said, *Acts 2. 5. There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout Men, out of every Nation under Heaven :* But what are those to these out of all Countries of the World : O what a vast number of Souls shall be congregated ! Such as never appeared together in this lower Region : When there shall be a general Collection of Mortals , beyond the Theaters , or Amphitheaters of the Ancient Romans , or Armies of Mahometans : *Multitudes, multitudes in this Mount as Joel speaks in the valley of decision. Joel 3. 14.*

2. That all this Congregation shall then be perfectly holy : So it may be truly said of this Assembly , as the murmuring Princes said of Israel, *All the Congregation are Holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them ; there is not one feeble Person among them, no infant of day's, but they are grown up to be strong, turn Gyants in Grace : They stand in no need of Ordinances, ministerial Gifts, and the exercise thereof are only for perfecting of the Saints, Eph.*

4. 12. But now they are above them, being perfected : That City hath no need
 Rev. 21. 23. *of the Sun, or of the Moon to shine in it :* As soon as ever the breath departs out of the body of a Child of God, it shakes off all Sin, and puts on a new Garment of perfect Holiness : They take their leave of the Body of Death and Earth together : Not one speck of dirt to be seen upon all this great Multitude : Souls take their leave of Sin, as they are taking their leave of this World : O what a glorious sight will that be of milk-white Saints ! Surely a lovely sight ; there will be no Pride, Passion, Impatience, nor any thing to vex themselves or others : The dregs are left behind, and pure quintessence floats upwards : Consecrated Souls are now elevated to the highest pitch, and defecated from filthy and defiling dregs : Oh what a blessed day will that be !

3. That all Troubles and Temptations in this lower World shall then cease : Neither the Devil nor wicked Men can follow them off this Dung-hill, although the Devil be
 Eph. 2. 2. *called the Prince of the Power of the Air,* yet he cannot stop or hurt the Saints as they pass through his Dominions ; nor shall he shoot a Dart at them or after them : All Troubles are at a Period : Death it self the King of Terrours is strangled ; it had no Sting to wound the Saints before, now it hath no being :
 1 Cor. 15. 56. *The fear of it was gone in some degrees*
 Heb. 2. 15.

degrees in their lives ; now the very feeling of it is gone : They are delivered not only from the Second but from the First Death : They shall never receive a mortal wound, no, nor any wound : *The accuser* (and abuser) of the Brethren *is cast out* : *Rev. 12. 10. Not only cast down*, but quite cast out , and all his Artillery and his Instruments.

4. When Saints are thus gathered together, they shall know one another : Its true , some kind of imperfect knowledge shall cease , that knowledge which is only acquired in the use of Means *shall vanish away*, *1 Cor. 13. 8.* Or, that which sees *through a glass darkly*, then shall we see *face to face*, verse 12. I must needs confess those two words are beyond my comprehension , of *knowing even as we are known* , and of *seeing God as he is* : *1 Cor. 13. 12.* And I suspect that no Mortal *1 John 3. 2.* can understand what they mean :

But I think the Faculties will be strangely enlarged, so that the Saints will know all natural things, and pierce into the Essence of the most intricate Beings, the Nature and Efficacy of Creatures, the Properties of Angels, the Mysteries of Redemption, the Councils of God : Though they are not omniscient, their Knowledge is limited, yet I think they will know all the Antient Patriarchs, *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Paul, Peter*, though they had never seen them in this World : Thus the rich

Man though damned, knew Fa-
ther Abraham, and *Lazarus* in
Luke 16. 23. his bosom : *Luther* discoursed the
 Night before he died, that Saints shall know
 one another hereafter, from *Adam's* knowing
 who *Eve* was, though he was a-
Gen. 2. 23. sleep, the Disciples knowing *Mo-*
ses and *Elias* in Christ's transfigura-
 tion, *Mat. 17. 3.* and indeed his mutual know-
 ledge will not be the least part of Saints hea-
 venly delight.

5. The Souls of Men live after they are se-
 parated from the Body : For, what is it which
 is gathered with the Saints ? Its not the Body,
 for that is laid in the dust, but its the Soul, for
 the Body and Soul meet not till the great Day
 of the Resurrection : Nor doth the Soul sleep
 in the dust till then, for our Lord
Luke 23. 43. said to the penitent Thief, *to day*
shalt thou be with me in Paradise :
 And *Paul* desired to be loosed, that
Psalms. 1. 23. he might be with Christ ; nor doth
 the Soul cease to be, it hath an
 existence in a separate State :
Mat. 10. 20. Men may kill the Body not the
 Soul : *Atomists* and *Epicureans* will
 not grant an annihilation of any one *Atom* in
 the Universe, surely then not this excellent
 Creature, the Soul of Man : Yea the Soul of
 Man continues its individuation, *i. e.* its distinct
 being, and falls not into one common univer-
 sal Soul of the World, as some have imagined :
 Spirits

Spirits have a numerical Difference, a distinct Being : Nor are we to think that the Soul returns into the Essence of God, because the Text saith, *The Spirit returns to God who gave it*, Eccl. 12. 7. It doth return to God to receive its Sentence from him, not into his Being, for then we should make God Divisible, and consisting of Parts, which is contrary to his infinite Divine Nature ; thus Souls have a distinct Being, yet depending on God the first Being, and are individuals, and must be accordingly judged.

6. That the Soul being gathered with the Elect enters immediately into glory ; to know where *Lazarus's* Soul was, while he was in the Grave, requires more skill then I can pretend to : Some think it hovered about the Grave by Christ's order, as designing its re-entring the Body ; but Scripture assures us of the immediate Salvation of gracious Souls : *They enter into peace*, when the Body rests in its Bed, *Isa. 57. 2.* They are pronounced *blessed that die in the Lord : When* Rev. 14. 13. *Christ who is our life shall appear,* *then shall we appear with him in Glory*, Col. 3. 4. Now they shall be glorious in their Souls : At the Resurrection, their Bodies will be Glorious, even like Christ's *Phi. 3. 21.* glorious Body : This answers that Query, whether the Saints shall have greater Glory at the Resurrection then they had immediately after their Death ? It is easy to de-

termine, that so far as there is an Addition of a glorified Body to the glorified Spirit, so far is the Glory greater, what further, I know not : Though Dr. *Hammond* thinks the Word [*ἀνάστασις*] when Flesh is not joined to it, signifies, that Life which the Soul enters upon immediately after Death, called Resurrection, i. e. Glorification : Certainly the Soul hath some intuitive Knowledge in its separate State and Felicity also, so far as it is capable.

7. When these blessed Souls are thus gathered together they shall never part, they shall live with God and each other for ever : Here we part and meet again, and meet and part again, and part so as we shall never meet again in this World : But in the other World we shall part no more through the Ages of Eternity : After Millions of Years the Comforts are as fresh as at the first Moment, never weary, nor interrup-

Rev. 7. 15.
chap. 20. 6.
chap. 22. 5.

ted, they are *before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple* : These Waters have a perpetual Spring ; this Day hath no Night : They shall reign with

Christ not a thousand Years definitively, but for ever and ever : O what a lasting and everlasting injoyment of God and Saints will that be ! What can part them, God will not, the Devil and wicked Men cannot, themselves shall not, for they have within them an incorruptible Seed, even of that Word *that liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. It is not with Saints
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in Heaven as with Boon-companions in playing, drinking, carousing Matches of sport and vanity, that must part ; nor is it with Saints there as with God's Children here in the Worship of God, that have their Intermiſſion, Ceſſations, Interruptions, are forced to break off : But there the work continues praizing God, the place continues, it hath Foundations, the perſons continue, *he that doth the will of God abideth for ever,* 1 John 2. 17.

C H A P. IV.

For what End the Saints are gathered together.

4. **T**HE next Head is to open the End or Design of the Saints gathering together, theſe are of Two Sorts, 1. Principal, 2. Secondary and Subordinate.

1. The primary and principal End is, the Glorifying of God ; the great God doth all things for this great End, 2 Theſ. 1. 10. *When he ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints , and ſo be admired in all them that believe :* The glory of the Saints ſhall reflect glory to God : God takes himſelf honoured in his Saints Honour, as the Prince is magnified in the ſplendour of his

1 Pet. 4. 14.

Dan. 12. 3.

Mat. 13. 43.

Court: If God be glorified in the bitterest Sufferings of his Saints, how much more in their Exaltations? Oh what a Luster will they cast, when they are all crowned as Kings, when they shall shine as the Firmament, yea as Stars, yea as the Sun in its Meridian glory, O what a strange change is this to be raised out of the Durst and Dung-hill, to sit upon Thrones? How came this to pass, surely the Author of this Glory will have the chief share therein, all God's perfections will be conspicuous: The Saints meeting together in the foresaid Manner, will tend to the glory of

1. God's Sovereignty, wherein he chose these that were Children of Wrath even as others to make them Vessels of Mercy, and left others as good as they to perish and be banished from God to all Eternity; then those eternal Councils will be displayed, and that Scripture fully explained, *Rom. 9. 15, 18, 22, 23.*

2. God's Wisdom shall be illustrious in contriving a way for Man's Redemption and Salvation: This Wisdom of God in a Mystery, *even the bidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, 1 Cor. 2. 7.* Then the Secrets of this Wisdom will be clearly laid open, to Angels and Men, which now they desire

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to look into, yea become Scholars in the Church to learn more of, *Eph. 3. 10.* *1 Pet. 1. 12.*

3. The Power of God will be illustrious in bringing poor weak Creatures through such a world of Difficulties and Oppositions, as Sheep in the midst of Wolves, Lions, Bears, in an howling Wilderness, yea themselves shall wonder how they ever got thither, and shall reflect with comfort and triumph, that they were kept by the power of God through Faith unto Salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.*

4. But no Attribute of God will shine so bright in that day of Saints meeting together, as that of his Free-grace, Love and Mercy, this orient Pearl in the Gold-ring of Glory will shine brightest; That up-hill City is built all of Free-stone, they had none mounted so high, had not the arms of love been under them: When this Head-stone of Glory is laid, it will be with shoutings, *grace, grace unto it, Zech. 4.*

7. The Cœlestial Pallace will ring with Acclamations of Grace: Grace laid the Foundation, and Grace lays the Top-stone in Glory: The glorified Soul will stand amazed, and say, *who am I O Lord God, and what is my house that thou hast brought me hither to?* *2 Sam. 7. 18.*

And Saints and Angels will stand gazing at them, and at God in them, that of such filthy Beasts hath made such holy Saints, of such Lepers not fit to be toucht, hath advanced them above the ordinary rate of Men,

Luke 20. 36. Men, equal unto the Angels : Fellow-saints shall adore Free-grace, Devils shall fret, Reprobates gnash their Teeth with envy, and Angels will gladly admit them into their Society : And God will be glorified in all.

This is the first and chief End God hath in gathering the Saints together.

2. There is also a secondary subordinate End of God's bringing his Saints together, and that is for their mutual Communion, Converse and Society with each other, and all with God together.

Negatively it shall not be.

1. To Trade, Buy and Sell, and have civil Commerce together, to make great Purchases, or to go to Fairs and Markets, or meet upon Exchange for Merchandice : There's no such things there : *Nor shall they Marry or be given in Marriage* ; nor converse as Husband and Wives, *Luke 20. 35.*

2. Nor shall they suffer together, or be thrown into Prisons, Dens, Caves of the Earth, to endure Hardships, seeking Relief, or begging their Bread ; the Devil and his Instruments are there non-suited, *the accuser of the brethren is cast down*, Rev. 12. 10. And all his Angels, Agents.

3. Much less shall they Sin together, by Acts of Immorality, or idle Talk or Chat, there shall not be uttered one vain Word to all Eternity ; nor shall they Quarrel, or Contend, and thereby grieve and fret or vex the Spirits one of another,

another, or sadden the Hearts of each other ; No, no, there shall be perfection of Grace, and compleat harmony of Minds and Affections.

4. Nor shall there be one word of Complaint as now there is, Christians when they meet here, spend much of their Time in bemoaning themselves, or bemoaning one another, in mutual Compassion, confessing their Faults to each other, according to *James 5. 16*, acquainting Christian Friends with their Grievances, begging their Advice, and the help of their Prayers ; O saith one, I am Ignorant, Hard-hearted, Unbelieving, have a treacherous Memory, am very Unprofitable ; saith another, I am sore assaulted with Satans Suggestions, hellish Temptations ; another saith, I am in the dark, God hides his Face, I know not what to make of my Condition ; another complains of dark Providences, and is afraid of missing his Way, in such a Case ; every one hath his peculiar Ailings and Grievances ; and one while raise their Hearts to God, another while to Christian Friends ; but there shall be no such thing as a whimper of complaining, when they meet together in that Solemn day.

2. More positively and affirmatively, the Ends and Business for which the Saints shall come together are these Two.

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1. The former concerns their personal Felicity : The Second concerns their mutual Society and Entercourse.

1. For their own personal Felicity, they shall meet together for these Ends :

1. To rest together, as their Bodies shall rest in the Grave, so shall their Soul rest with God : This is the time of *refreshing that comes from the presence of the Lord*, Acts 3. 19. *Now they rest from their labours*, sinful, evil, and natural, never more to be pestered any more with the Hurries of a mad World, Temptations of a malicious Devil, or Corruptions of a treacherous Heart : Rest is sweet, this Rest is most sweet, *when they enter into Peace they rest in their Beds*, Isa. 57. 2.

2. To be rewarded ; *great is their reward in Heaven*, Mat. 5. 12. This Reward doth greatly animate God's Saints in their Labours and Losses, they still *have respect to the recompence of Reward*, and they shall not be disappointed for it is a sure Reward ; and their Confidence

Heb. 11. 26.

Pro. 11. 18.

batb great recompence of Reward, Heb. 10. 35. Not by any thing we have done in point of commutative Justice, yet by distributive Justice, by vertue of God's promise in the New Covenant, God will be as good as his Word.

3. They meet to rejoyce together, at present, *they rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God*, Rom.

Rom. 5. 2. But Heaven is the true proper Element of Joy: If at a distance and unseen, the Christian *can rejoyce* Isa. 35. 10. *with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*, upon actings of a Faith of Adherence: Oh what Joy will the Christian have above, this is an entering into our Masters Joy, because our Vessels are too narrow for this joy to enter into us; O what transport of joy at the Saints arrival!

4. They meet to Reign: *The Saints of the most high shall take the Kingdom and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever*, Dan. 7. 18. Rev. 22. 5. Not only shall godly Ministers receive a crown of glory that *fadeth not a way*; but suffering Saints shall have the Crown of Life, which God hath promised to all that love him, James 1. 12. Earthly Crowns are but rotten Trifles to this Crown that all Saints shall receive: This is an high transcendent Preferment.

5. They meet together to receive their Inheritance: At present they are but as Children in their Minority, but at Death they take possession of their rightful Inheritance, and it is an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. All God's Children are Heirs, and *beirs according to promise*, and this Glory they have

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hereafter is a reward of inheritance, Col. 3. 24. The Kingdoms of the Earth countervail not this blessed Inheritance above.

6. They meet together to triumph upon their blessed Conquest: What strange Triumphers shall Saints be hereafter, that are *more then Conquerours here*? All the Saints shall be cloathed with *white robes and palmes in their hands*, Rev. 7. 9. O the triumphant Song they sing, Rev. 15. 3. It is unintelligible by others, and cannot be learned by any but overcomers: O happy Souls!

7. They meet to see the Execution of God's Vengeance upon the Wicked, Jude 14. 15. *Behold the Lord cometh to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of their ungodly deeds and hard speeches,—the righteous shall rejoyce when he seeth the vengeance*, Psal. 58. 10. The more the Saints Will is melted into God's Will, the more content will they have in the executing of Justice, not so much on God's Creatures, but his Enemies, see 2 Thes. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9.

8. They meet for a clear Manifestation of their inward Principles and outward Practices to each other: Saints are called *hidden ones*, their best part is most out of sight; *their life is hid with Christ in God, but when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory*, Col. 3. 3, 4. Yea, and the Creature waiteth for the

the manifestation of the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 19. O what a display will there be at that day of Men's inward States one to another, never before known, 1 John 3. 1, 2.

9. They meet to have their Graces perfected: This (and never till then) is the day when that is accomplished, *Eph. 4. 12, 13. The perfecting of the Saints till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: Then will every corner of the Soul be filled with Grace, to the full brim: He that begun a good work here, will perform till the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1. 6. Now they have attained to that they were pressing after; O blessed day! Oh sweet attainment!*

10. Yet, once more they meet together to enjoy God immediately together: This Crowns all the rest, this is the top of all, the Achme and highest Felicity of a rational Soul: This is that they have been long breathing after: Some glimpses of his blessed Face they saw through the glass of Ordinances, and were thereby changed into the same image from glory to glory, *2 Cor. 3. 18. But that sight of God was but through a glass darkly, but then face to face, 1 Cor. 13. 12. When he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3. 2. What Man dwelling on this side Death knows the meaning of that Word? God said to Mo-*
ses,

ses, thou canst not see my face, its
Exod. 33. 20. well if we can see his back parts;
 but then the Lord will unveil his
 blessed Face to glorified Souls : We cannot till
 now how a finite Soul is capable of seeing an
 infinite Object, but then as the faculties will
 be strangely enlarged and extended, so this Vi-
 sion will exceed our present low Apprehensions:

Mat. 5. 8. This is called the beautiful Vision,
 promised to the pure in heart that
they shall see God ; and its this that
 makes them compleatly Happy : That's one of
 the sweetest words in the Bible, 1 Thes. 4. 17,
 18. *Then we which are alive and remain, shall be*
caught up together with them in the clouds to meet
the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with
the Lord, wherefore comfort one another with these
words.

C H A P. V.

An Account of the Intercourse the Saints
have at their meeting together.

THE former Head referred to the main
 Business of the Saints meeting together,
 which was glorifying God, injoying of him,
 which consists in their personal Felicity.

2: This

2. This latter concerns their mutual Society, and familiar Entercourse one with another, which will be additional to their comfort and happiness in those heavenly Regions.

Communion of Saints is one Article of our Faith, and the great Priviledge of Believers in this lower World; both that which is Catholick with all Saints through the World, and that which is Personal and Immediate with Members of the same Society: As soon as any Man commenceth Christian, he espouseth this Communion, Phil. 1. 5. *For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now*: Wicked Men talk their good Fellowship in feasting, drinking, jesting, gaming, alas they are all but Child's play, yea Devils sport to this, and leave the Soul sapless and guilty: But this Fellowship of God's Children is delectable, honourable and profitable, a distinctive Character of a Saint, an Emblem of Heaven, a step to Communion with God.

Yet that Fellowship they have in Glory far exceeds that they have below, for they are defecated from the dregs of Corruption and sinful Passions, their Souls purified, their Graces perfected, and though they be different Lives, yet all center in God.

That the Saints above have familiar Entercourse one with another, is generally asserted, and very probable; because such a Communication doth greatly heighten their Comfort and Happiness: But how this is carried on, is not

so Evident; whether it be [*imprimendo*] imprinting their Conceptions in the Minds of each other, as *Scotus* saith, or [*representando, ordinando*] ordering their Conceptions in their own Minds, and so in some peculiar way representing them by certain Species to others: So *Aquinas*; or [*sonando*] by forming Sounds, which after their way are intelligible: But we that are so much strangers to the Nature of Spirits, cannot conceive of these things.

Yet after the Resurrection, when Bodies are united to their Souls, possibly they may hold Discourse vocally; yet, it must be said, whilst in this World, in a sound Sense, that they *know no Man after the flesh*, 2 Cor. 5. 16. How much less in Heaven, when their Bodies become Spiritual, will they know each other, or confer together in a low carnal Manner, as they do here in this World.

Let the more learned read Dr. *Tuckny's* Discourse in his *Prælect. Theol.* Page 152 to 157, upon this Question [*Beati in statu gloriæ se mutuo sunt aquituri:*] That the Blessed in the State of Glory shall know each other, for which he brings Proofs out of Scripture, of *Dives* and *Lazarus* and *Moses*, and this in Christ's Transfiguration, &c. and some Argument.

But of this I shall say as he [*quod questio ista in se contineat veritatem theologicam non fundamentalem fidei Articulum*] that this Question contains in it a Theological Truth, not a Fundamental Article of Faith; not necessary to our
Salvation,

Salvation, but useful to our Edification and Cor-
 solation.

Now if it be asked, what Subjects the Saints glorified shall in all probability discourse upon, I confess its an high an hard Question; for, I do find in the 2 Cor. 12. 4. that when the Apostle Paul was lifted up into the Third Heavens, he heard [ἀρρητὰ ῥήματα] *wordless Words, or Words that could not be uttered*, or which it is not law-ful for a Man to utter: God forbid that I should presume to express either the Matter or the Manner of these Conferences above: But words or things they are that are uttered, and we may lawfully guess at what the Saints above confer of, by the holy laudible Discourses they have here; and they may be such as these:

1. Concerning the Work of Creation:
 For though the visible Heavens and Earth shall be burnt up, yet nevertheless, according to his Promise, they shall see *new heavens and new earth, wherein dwells Righteousness*, 2 Pet. 3. 12,
 13. Fire purifies, so the visible
 Heavens which were defiled with *Rev. 18. 5.*
 Men's Sin, shall be purged with
 Fire, and the creature shall be deli- *Rom. 8. 21.*
 vered from the bondage of corruption:

And oh what a brave shew will that present?
 Far beyond Golden Mountains, Rocks of Pearl
 or Diamonds, or Chrystal streams: A semblance
 of it we have in *Rev. 21.* which is the wonder-
 ful Workmanship of the great Creator, enough
 to imploy the Eyes and Tongues of those Cœ-

lestial Inhabitants to the Praise of *Jehovah*, Rev. 4. 9, 10, 11. and though the first Creation be past away, yet the mighty Fabrick of this vast Universe will possess the Thoughts of the Saints, with admiration of God's Power, Wisdom, Holiness which shines therein, and they will reflect upon with Discourses one to another, and adoring God: To the Honour of his Majesty.

2. Concerning Man's Apostacy: How excellently God had placed Man in the Primitive state of Perfection in his own Image, with perfect Faculties in the Image of
Psal. 8. 6. of God, *with dominion over the works of God's hands*: Yet he unreasonably made defection from God, and rose up in rebellion against God, by violating the Moral Law engraven in his Heart; and the Positive Law of not eating the Fruit of one Tree: Whereby he utterly ruined all his Posterity, made himself and his Off-spring subject to God's wrath and curse here and hereafter to all Eternity: This will be greatly aggravated to the advancement of Free-grace in our deliverance out of it.

3. Especially the Saints shall discourse of the Means of our Redemption: The infinite Wisdom, Grace and Love in God's Contrivance of it; the transcendent Love, Care, Faithfulness of Christ in the managing of it, the Nature, Birth, Death, Resurrection, Ascension of the Son of God, his Offices, suited to our State,

State, and all his Mediatory Undertakings : This will be a Voluminous Book for Saints to read, fairly written in indelible Characters ; and the glorious Object before their Eyes, at the right Hand of God, in heavenly Places, above Principalities ; to be a perpetual Monitor of his glorious Transactions : This shall be the triumphant Harmony of the Cœlestial Inhabitants to all Eternity, *Rev.* 5. 8, 9, 13, 14.

4. The privilege of Believers ; the blessed Fruits of Christ's purchases : Now they shall more fully understand and take the due dimensions of the Benefits of Reconciliation, Justification, Adoption, peace of Conscience, joy of the Holy-Ghost ; these privileges will be better understood then, and discoursed of one to another : O what blessed Effects of Divine Grace ! We enjoyed them, but did not duly conceive of them, now we see what it is to be the Children of God, to be Justified, Sanctified ; these were greater Mercies then we were aware of : Let us cast our Eye back, and consider what we were once, what Bruits, Sots, but how we *were washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God,* 1 Cor. 6. 11. Ah, what a pleasant Theam is this !

5. The Ordinances enjoyed : Oh, how many savory Sermons have we heard ! How often have we been feasted together at the Lord's Table ? What sweet Fellowship have we had with

the Saints in the lower World! Many an Heart-melting Fast, many a Soul-refreshing Thanksgiving, many an edifying, Heart-warning Conference: I could then say, *it was*

Psal. 73. 28. good for me to draw nigh to God:
Those Duties led us to this Glory:

God help us to improve Ordinances, and now we are got quite above Ordinances.

6. The difficulties of our Pilgrimage: While the Saints stand on the shore of Eternity, and look back at the stormy tempestuous Sea they have passed, the Pirats, Rocks and Sands they escaped, by the conduct of the great Pilot, it fills them with Admiration and Astonishment: How many roaring Devils, furious onsets of Men: What Temptations, Persecutions they have passed through, what hard Duties they have performed, what Corruptions they have mortified, what Burthens they have born; all these do accent their Joy to an high pitch.

7. Ministers, and their Hearers will communicate their former Experiences: Oh, will the Convert say, it was a blessed Day that ever I saw such a Ministers Face, or heard his Voice: I remember the Text, the Doctrine, the Particular, that first touched my

Cant. 2. 3. Heart: I sat under that shadow with great delight, the fruit was sweet to my Soul, God healed me by the same Hand, that wounded me; possibly the Minister never knew till now all the Souls he hath been an Instrument to Convert: Now they have a reciprocal

procal Joy, when *sower and reaper rejoyce together*, John 4. 26.

8. Godly Relations will mutually reflect on Days that are past, though now not as Husband and Wife, yet as *quondam* in that Relation: They *were heirs together of the grace of life*, prayed, wept, suffered, and sweetly conversed together, the Father wept over the miscarrying Child, prevail'd with God, his Miscarriages cost him dear, but his Conversion was as life from the dead, that was a costly Child, how the more lovely the gracious Child reflects upon, recounts the godly Fathers and Mothers Prayers and Tears, Counsels, Admonitions.

1 Pet. 3. 7.

9. The distinction Grace hath made betwixt them and others: Such a one as well Born, Bred, Educated as we, sometimes under Convictions, sat under the same means of Grace, of fine Parts, made a Profession, and were once as likely for Heaven as I, but fell into gross Sin, or kept in a course of Formality, and these are now swallowed up in Eternal Torments, why, am not I in their Case? *Who made us to differ?* It was nothing but Free-grace that gave me a Repenting-heart: I was as likely to Perish as he, and as unable to help my Self as he.

1 Cor. 4. 6.

10. Christians will discourse of the various Providences of God in this World: I was Sick and the Lord raised me up, had I dyed then, I had been undone, for I was in a graceless

State: God in *faithfulness* afflicted me, I had perished, if I had not perished, I was wandering, and God brought me home by weeping Cross: I had not been thus Happy, if I had not been Miserable; all things did work for my Good: The Lord supplied my Wants, supported me in Troubles, vouchsafed many Mercies in my Pilgrimage, whereby he rendred my Condition comfortable: Many a particular Dispensation of Providence will be then laid open to others.

II. The seasons of special Inlargement; they will then declare what God hath done for their Souls: Many things that passed betwixt God and their Souls, that were not fit to be divulged in this World, will then be laid open to the glory of God, and their own and others joy and abundant content as those two Disciples said, Luke 24. 32. *did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way?*

Oh, what sweet Intercourse with
Cant. 7. 12. God had my Soul in such a Chamber, Closet; there did he give me his Loves, and I gave him mine: It was a little corner of Heaven: Such an Ordinance, Presence, was as one of the Days of Heaven; I could have been content to have died there.

12. *Lastly*, They shall discourse of the Felicity they are now advanced to, and the Perpetuity of it: This State is beyond, *what eye hath*

*both seen, ear heard, or could enter
into the heart of Man; little, ah* 1 Cor. 2. 9.

little did I then know what I
now enjoy: One hour in this blisful State,
compensates all my days of Service or Suffer-
ing: O that I had done more for God! I am
faith *Luther*, ashamed that God should so
abundantly reward so little Work: But God
acts like himself, I did but little for God, but
God doth much for me: Who would not serve
such a Master? My Sufferings were but light
and momentary, but this is a far more *exceeding
and eternal weight of glory*: O

What a beautiful Master have 2 Cor. 4. 17.
we served: Nor is this for a
short Season, to have an End, but it is lasting,
everlasting; it would damp our Joy, if we
were in danger to lose this Felicity, but let us
take Courage, we shall never be expelled out
of this our Paradice as *Adam* was out of his:
This Happiness shall run Paralel with the Life
of God, and live of Eternity.

You'l say, how do you know that this shall
be their Discourses, have you been there to
hear it, or who told you?

I Answer no, but we may rationally guess
at it, partly from some general Hints in Scrip-
ture, partly from their profitable and comfor-
table Discourse on Earth, which will then be
heightened, and indeed because they shall speak
and act such things as most tend to the Glory
of God, and their own greater Joy and Comfort.

C H A P.

C H A P VI.

How the Saints shall be gathered together unto Christ, and Reasons why they must be gathered together.

5. **T**HE next general Head is what is to be meant by the Saints gathering together unto Christ, so saith the Text.

I must confess, Interpreters greatly differ about the meaning of these Words, [*καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτὸν*] which some Interpret of meetings of Christians together in Assemblies, *Heb. 10. 25.* And so render [*ἐπ' αὐτὸν*] *propter ipsum*, as *Jam. 2. 7.* *that worthy name* [*τὸ ἐπικληθὲν ἐφ' ὑμᾶς*] *which is called upon you, super vos*: So they will have this to refer to the free Liberty of Christians, in uninterrupted meetings in Countries, Cities, after the Scattering of the Jewish Nation that censured Christians as a wicked Sect; but in the days of *Vespasian, Titus*, but especially in *Constantines* Time, enjoyed liberty of meeting together for celebrating God's publick Worship: So indeed [*συνερχεσθαι*] and [*συνάγειν*] *convenire, congregare*, in publick Edict signify: But most take it for that general universal Meeting at Christ's second coming in the Air at the last Day,

1 *Thes.*

1 *Thef.* 4. 14, 17. when all the Elect shall be gathered to Christ: Now this gathering of Saints to Christ doth comprehend these Four things ;

1. The State and Qualification of the Object.
2. The Reason or Relation betwixt them.
3. The Frame and Disposition of the Subject.
4. The Sight, Vision or Fruition of him.

I shall very briefly open all these.

1. The State and Qualification of the Object, that is Christ, under a double Notion, *1st*. As God, Man ; *2^{dly}*. As advanced to the right Hand of God.

1. They shall be gathered to him as God and Man, which is a State of the highest Perfection: Compleat Man as glorious a Creature as *Adam* in Innocency, and yet much more endeared to his Saints, by that reflecting on what he hath done and suffered for them and the Fruits thereof; this is he of whom 'tis said, when he *bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith and let all the Angels of God worship him*, Heb. 1. 6. This is the admirable Person, consisting of his two Natures, Divine and Humane; never did created or uncreated Nature afford the like: In whom all Perfections meet, in whom all Excellencies are united.

2. As exalted to the right Hand of God: They are not now to be gathered to Christ, as he was in his State of Humiliation, when Multitudes flockt to his Preaching, working Miracles,

cles, when he was but in the form of a Servant, or going to suffer on the Cross, no, nor yet in his State of Transfiguration, which was Glorious but Temporary; but now he *is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

Heb. 1. 3. God hath now given Phil. 2. 9, 10. him a name above every name far above all principalities and powers and hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22. It is this State of Glory in which Christ is enthroned, and now receiving Homage from all ranks of Creatures (Devils being confined to their Prisons,) attended with innumerable Angels; 'tis Christ in this glorious State; that the Saints are to be gathered to.

2. The Reason thereof, which consists in the Relation betwixt Christ and his Saints, all which carry abundance of delight and sweetness in them: For, it is not as Strangers or Enemies that love him not, nor yet as Malefactors brought to the Bar, that dread him as Judge: But they are gathered to Christ under these sweet Relations.

1. As Sheep to their Shepherd, whose Voice they *know here, and follow him,* John 10. 3, 4. yea they own him with a more then ordinary endearedness, because he laid down his Life for the Sheep, *verse 15.* and carried those poor lambs in his arms, and leads them to quiet resting places,

Isa. 40. 11.

ces, where they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. *Ezek. 34. 28.*

2. As Souldiers to their Captain, not to Fight, but to take the Spoil, the Captain of our Salvation is made perfect through sufferings: He is now crowned with glory and honour and brings many Sons unto glory, *Heb. 2. 9, 10.* He pitcheth out a Crown to every Souldier, and sets the victorious Champion with him on his own Throne, *Rev. 3. 21.*

3. As Scholars to their Master, who sets them not in a low Form, as under Graduates, but they commence the highest degree of Perfection in the University of Glory, to know as much as Creatures are capable, they shall know as they are known, *1 Cor. 13. 12.* Now he is a vessel unto Honour, meet for his Masters use, set on the shelf of *2 Tm. 2. 21.* Glory.

4. As Subjects to their Prince, to be preferred into the King's Presence-chamber: Not any longer to be banisht into a foreign Country; no, nor yet to be Retainers, hanging about the Court at a distance, but approaching into his Presence: Jesus Christ is in the immediate Presence of *Heb. 9. 24.* God, Saints shall be with him:

In whose presence is fulness of joy at his right hand are pleasures for ever more, *Psal. 101.*

5. As Friends to a Feast: Our Lord called and accounted all his Saints, Friends in this World,

World, *John* 15. 14, 15. and he deales familiarly with them, providing for them a Feast of fat things: But there will come a day when he will *drink this wine new with them in his fathers kingdom*, *Mat.* 26. 29. O blessed Feast! O sweet Society! When he will say, *eat ob friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved*, *Cant.* 5. 2.

6. As Children are gathered to their Father, not only to receive a Blessing, but to take full possession of their Inheritance, *Col.* 3. 24. *knowing that of the Lord, ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ: All*

Rom. 8. 17. God's Son's are Heirs, and then it will be manifest who are Son's, *1 John* 3. 2. that's a blessed Word, *Rev.* 21. 7.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my Son.

7. As Members are gathered to their Heart, *Eph.* 5. 30. *for we are members of his body of his flesh and of his bones*: Now alais the Members are oft disjointed from each other, and too much distant from the Head, but there will come a day when they shall be joined all in one: There's then no discrepancy betwixt Head and Members, but they are grown up into him in all things, *which is the head even Christ*, *Eph.* 4. 15, 16.

Thus much for the Relation they have to Christ, which is the Reason of this gathering together to him.

3. The

3. The Frame and Disposition of the Subject : There is in every Child of God, a kind of natural Propensity, which inclines them in a peculiar Manner towards Christ as the Needle towards the Loadstone, by which they move and bend Heaven-wards: *Return unto thy rest, O my Soul saith David, Psal. 116. 7.* As all Creatures move to their center, so doth the sincere Soul God-wards; and can never be quiet till it be closely joined and cemented to him, and that God that hath fixed these innate Principles in the Soul, will promote and perfect them: Now this Frame and Disposition of a Child of God, proceeds *1st.* From the Conviction of Conscience, and Deficiency he finds in other things: *2dly.* From a sensible Experience that the Soul hath of Satisfaction in Christ.

1. The Consciences of God's Children are fully satisfied, that all the World cannot give the least ease to their Souls: This made Solomon cry out, *vanity of vanities, all is vanity: The Christian cries out, away with these Toys: Worldly Enjoyments are not commensurate to an immortal Soul, Mat. 16. 26.* The Judgment is convinced that the *world passeth away, and the lust thereof, 1 John 2. 17.* All the Splendor of the world fades, there's a vanity and emptiness in all Sublimaries [*non est mortale quod opto*] that's the Christians Motto: I wish not, for, I am not content with *mundane* or worldly things:

things : I must look beyond the Moon to Heaven for a Felicity : I have suck'd the juice of every Flower in this Garden of the World, yet my Soul is empty.

2. The Christian hath tasted that the Lord is Gracious, and this sets him a longing and hungry for more Grace and Incomes from above, 1 Pet. 2. 23. The Gauls having tasted the sweet Wine of the Grapes that grew in Italy, were never at rest till they had conquered the Country : So it is with the godly Soul [*optima demonstratio est à sensibus*] Sense brings the clearest Evidence, especially Spiritual Sences, for some Natural Sences may be deceived, *this I pray, saith the Apostle, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge, and in all judgment*, Phil. 1. 9. [*ὅτι πλεονάζουσιν,*] in all sense, for the Soul hath its Sences as well as the Body, and being sanctified and

Heb. 5. 14.

duly exercised, they discern betwixt Good and Evil : And indeed this is the proper Genius of the new Creature, to press forwards and aspire upwards, Rom. 8. 23. *we which have the first fruits of the spirit groan within our selves, waiting for the adoption; the redemption of our body* : There are Heaven born Principles laid up in godly Souls, that make them sore aloft to enjoy God.

4. The gathering to Christ, includes the Sight, Vision and Fruition of Christ, the full Injoyment of him : Beholding God is properly Fruitive Vision of him : *Blessed are the pure*

in

in heart, for they shall see God, Mat. 5. 8. This is not of meer Speculation, but Fruition; if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, Rom. 6. 8. This is by sight of him and appearing with him in glory, Col. 3. 4. This blisful sight of Christ, is that which makes Heaven, for where the King is, there is the Court; this Glory is in conformity to him, and communion with him: This is it to be gathered to Christ, i. e. to have Christ fully revealed to us, the approach to him under dearest Relations, the Soul disposed and duly qualified to enjoy him, and full Vision and Fruition of him: If any of these be wanting, we cannot in Scripture-Sense be gathered to Christ.

6. The next Head is the Reasons why our Lord will thus gather his Saints to Christ at the last day?

Though I have toucht at some things already, that might be improved as Reasons, yet I shall add.

1. Because this is the good Pleasure of God, John 6. 39. *And this is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day, how tender is God of his Jewels, he will gather them and make them up carefully, Mat. 3. 17. To be sure Rom. 6. 27. he will neither keep them out, nor cast them out: The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth [and will own] them that are his, 2 Tim. 2. 19. the elects-*

Rom. 11. 7.

on must obtain salvation: It runs invisibly much under ground, but will appear at last in Mansions a-

bove.

2. Because this is the Fruit of Christ's Purchase, 1 Pet. 3. 18. *For Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God*; He is the Ladder of *Jacob*, upon whom Elect Souls ascend to Glory: This was the End of his reconciling us by his Blood, to present us *holy, unblamable, and unreprouable in his sight*, Col. 1. 20, 22. our Lord will not lose the Fruits of his dear Purchase: Yea he follows it with his Prayer, John 17. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*, God always hears him.

3. Because of the sanctifying and sealing Work of the Spirit, 2 Thes. 2. 13. *God hath chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth*; observe it, Sanctification and Salvation, have an inseparable Connexion: Saints in the Old Testament and in the New have the *same spirit of faith*, 2 Cor. 4. 13. This animates all the Members of Christ, running through the Veins of his mystical Body; and this is the seal and earnest of our future inheritance, Eph. 1. 13, 14. To be sure God will not lose his Earnest, or throw it to Hell.

4. Saints shall be gathered together to Christ, because they are all wrapt in the same Bond of the Everlasting Covenant; its called the bond
of

of the covenant, Ezek. 20. 37. And by this Covenant all the Saints become *one stick in the Lords hand*, Ezek. 37. 17. Suppose abundance of Twigs be bound up together, yet they all make up but one Rod; many Stones make but one building; many Inhabitants make but one City or Kingdom: *All Saints are fellow citizens*, Eph. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. God will not part them either in this or in the other World: Sincere and persevering Souls, shall all meet before the Throne, to sing *Hallelujahs* with harmonious Melody: All the Saints through the World are Children of the same Father, God; yea they that *are of faith, are children of Abraham*, Gal. 3. 7. In a Spiritual Sense, one *household of faith*, Gal. 6. 10. *fellow heirs of the same body*, Eph. 3. 6. *fellow servants*, Col. 1. 7. *brethren in Christ, faithful brethren*, Col. 1. 2. *fellow citizens with the Saints*, Eph. 2. 19. *and of the household of God*: Such special Relation calls for this Congregating; No doubt, they must be gathered together at last.

C H A P. VII.

*Inferences from this Doctrine of Saints
being gathered together.*

THE Improvement I shall make of this Point, shall be 1st. for Doctrine, or information of our Minds and Judgments in these Ten Inferences and Consequentials.

1. That God is Omniscient and Omnipotent known, *unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts 15. 18. He is infinite in Knowledge and Wisdom, that takes account of the meanest Creatures, and he is of infinite Power to gather them up; these are the Lord's People, and his Inheritance, which he hath brought out by his *mighty power and stretched out arm*, Deut. 9. 29. As God brought his *Israel* out of *Egypt*, so he laid out the same Power in bringing them into *Canaan*, so the same Power that converted Sinners, will also save them, for they are *kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

2. That Jesus Christ is a compleat Saviour, He is able to *save to the uttermost*, Heb. 7. 25. [*εἰς τὸ παντὸς*] every way, to all intents and purposes, Soul and Body in all cases, difficulties, conditions, in all Dispensations: Yet it
hath

hath a further meaning, He is able to save totally, finally, perfectly and perpetually, so as none shall need to come after him, to finish what he hath begun; yet further, He saves, so as he shall never cease to be a Saviour to all Eternity: For, though he finished his suffering Work on Earth, and his crowning Work at the great Day of Judgment, yet the God-enjoying Work shall be by him, through the Ages of Eternity; as he shall be lookt on as the Authour, so he will be the Object of their Happines, and embrace them in the Arms of his Love for evermore.

3. That Death is not terrible to a gracious Person: Its true to Nature it may well be called *the king of terrors*; Job 18. 14. it is a dissolving of this compound Man, but it is the shell and cloathing of the Soul that's laid by, an Elementary composition that's dissolved, the Soul is thereby set at liberty, and takes its flight into another World, a World of Spirits: A better State then here, Death is but a bridge, a portal that opens the Door to Heaven: Christ hath unstung Death, perfumed the Grave, and made it a means of Manumission into the blessed Society of God, Angels and Saints, thousands better then we are gone, who are we to be exempted? Its no untrodden Path, our best Friends are above, let us not be afraid to follow them.

4. That Heaven is a capacious place ; all the Saints in the Old Testament are gone thither, and Millions in New-Testament days, are mounted to Glory, *an hundred forty four thousand of all the Tribes of Israel*, and a great multitude which no man could number, *Rev. 7. 49.* Moses and Elias came from Heaven at Christ's Transfiguration ; *Abraham* in glory, and all his spiritual Offspring, which makes a vast number ; yet there's room enough left in those extracted Mansions above : How small a point is this habitable World compared with Heaven, where there is *innumerable company*

Heb. 12. 22. of Angels and spirits of just Men made perfect : Yet none refused or kept out that are written in the *lamb's book of life* : Heaven is capable of entertaining all the Son's

of God, it is a [this *πανδοχείον*] *Heb. 11. 13.* universal Receptacle for all Pilgrims and Strangers here on the Earth.

5. No unclean thing shall enter Heaven :

Nothing that defileth ; no Dogs shall tread on that golden Pavement, *without are dogs*, as large as it is, wicked graceless Sinners shall not creep or croud into it ; our Lord keeps the Keys of Paradise in his own Hands, he cannot be guilty of an oversight, for

Rev. 2. 18. his Eyes are like a flame of fire, none can give him the slip undiscernably ; he knows them that are his, and he disowns

disowns others: *For without holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. Grace and Glory go hand in hand, unconverted Sinners can no sooner enter Heaven (continuing so) then Devils or damned Souls: Persons must be gathered by Conversion, or not gathered by Salvation.

6. Saints glorified, shall retain their Intellection and some kind of Sensation, as they shall intuitively see God, *know as they are known*, discern spiritual *Mat. 5. 8.* Mysteries more clearly then ever: *1 Cor. 13. 12.* So they shall have some kind of sense and feeling, from whence come Love, Joy, Delight; for the Soul wants not the exercise of its essential Faculties, for want of bodily Organs: These operations of the Soul in Flesh, are but imperfect shadows of that Intellection and volition above, and so of that excellent Sense and Affections of Love and Joy, which we now cannot clearly conceive of here below: See this fully in Mr. *Baxter's Dying Thoughts*, page 201.

7. The Saints in Heaven will know one another; as the Disciples knew *Moses* and *Elias*, and those that never saw one anothers Faces in this World shall meet together with great content; and this shall be no small part of their Happiness, when they shall say, there stands holy *Enoch*, righteous *Noah*, grieving *Lor*, believing *Abraham*, upright *David*, patient *Job*, penitent *Peter*, zealous *Paul* the beloved, love-

My Disciple *John*, victorious Champions, and my glorious Companions for ever: And we together are perfected and glorified, Oh happy day, blessed meeting!

8. The multitudes injoying God in Heaven, will be no diminution of their Joy: Those thousands of Eyes beholding the Sun, do not extenuate its Light: For the Acts diminish not the Object, no more then the King is less for his Courtiers beholding him: The King of Heaven can give content to all the

Psal. 16. 11.
Chap. 36. 9.

Cœlestial Inhabitants, all the Saints shall bath in this pleasant River, and drink abundantly of the fountain of life, nor will the different Degrees of Glory beget want or envy in such as have less, for every Vessel shall be as full as it can hold: The Cœlestial Cour-

1 Cor. 15. 28.

iers have all God, shall be all in all; it is thought, that such as had more Grace, and had done God more service here, shall shine brighter then others, from *Dan.* 12. 3. *1 Cor.* 15. 41. But yet there shall be no Emulation, nay, they shall rather rejoyce in each others Graces and Glory.

9. That in Heaven there will be a mutual and reciprocal exchange of Gifts and Graces: And this will be no small part of their Comfort; O what clasping of Arms! What endearredness of Affection! What inlettings into each others Hearts! As the Sun shineth on the Stars, so the Stars shine on each other; God doth abundantly

abundantly irradiate their Souls, and they comfort one another: Not but that there is enough in God to delight them, but this is in some respect accumulative: The Saints above will look on each others Grace as if it were their own: Yea there will be a mutual Aptitude and Disposition to serve each other, and contribute to their Felicity.

10. The sweet Harmony of Spirits will be inconceivable Melody in Heaven, far beyond the Musick of the Sphears they talk of: Those blessed Inhabitants shall be filled with the Spirit, Love, Joy, *Gal. 5. 22.* Peace, then they shall indeed speak among themselves, *in Psalms and Hymns and spiritual Songs, singing and making Melody in their Hearts to the Lord, Eph. 5. 18, 19.* Then they shall with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God: Not one jarring String in the heavenly Concert: Their Hearts will be centred on God, and their Lines streight with each other: O blessed day when there will be no jars or wranglings, but *Luther and Calvin* will sweetly agree, when *Melancthon and Zwinglius* will sweetly conspire to celebrate the Praises of our common Lord: O sweet and blessed day.

C H A P. VIII.

*Reprehension and Conviction of Graceless
and Gracious Souls.*

2. **A** Nother Use is of Conviction : 1. Of such as are Graceless, 2. Of Godly Persons.

1. Of unconverted graceless Persons.

1. Must there be a gathering together of Saints, and only Saints, what then will become of Wicked men? They are not to be gathered with Saints, they cared not for their Company here, and they shall not have their Society in the other World.

1. Wicked men shall be banished from among the Godly, this is no small Punishment. *He shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left, Mat. 25. 32, 33. He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.* In this World they were mingled together, in the same Kingdom, City, House, Assembly, and none was able to distinguish them; they were taken to be as Devout as the best, and they took themselves to be as good as any: But now they shall be detected, and the rottenness of the Heart

Hearts shall be laid open, before themselves, Angels, and Men, *and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh*, so says the Evangelical Prophet, *Isa. 66. 24.* This will be none of the least of Wicked mens Punishment to see those that they had scorned, slighted, and censured, as of worthy Humane Society, to mount up, and sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the Kingdom of Heaven; and the Children of the Kingdom (these Church-members) to be cast out into utter darkness, *Mat. 8. 11, 12.* O had parting, never to meet again! How will the Wicked wish they had lived in Prisons, Poverty, and woful straits in this World, so they might now go along with them into Glory. O that we had spent our time in Prayer, Reading, Meditation, Conference, and Works of Mortification, as these Holy Souls did, then had we been happy, as these are: but now we see our loss: We thought your life madness, but now we are convinced of our Folly, and the wisdom of your Choice.

2. These poor graceless Souls must be forever banished from the Eternal God, the Fountain of all Happiness: They bid God depart, *Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, *Job 21. 14.* If not in so many words, yet interpretatively by their Works: And now God will say, *Depart from me, ye cursed*, *Mat. 25. 41.* The dreadfullest Word in the Bible, the most astonishing Sentence that can come out of the Mouth of God, or
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can be heard by the Ears of Men. The enjoyment of God is the Saints Heaven, banishment from God is the Wicked's Hell; yea, the very Hell of Hells; the only Venom, Sting and Poison of that Infernal Lake. They that are not gathered to God, are separated from God; and once banished, and for ever banish'd; they cannot be parted from his Revenging Justice, but from his Comforting Love: *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. 1. 9.* The pain of loss is greater than the pain of sense: *Grave dreadful Case!* Now poor Sinners will be banished from the Beatifical Presence, and shall never more see God or Christ to their Comfort. O wretched State! Sinners shall know what the loss of God meaneth. They gathered themselves together under Ordinances but desired not God's Presence in Ordinances more know what Communion with God meant, but they shall know what Separation from God now means: Where Love ended Wrath begins, Fury comes in the room of Mercy. *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver, Psal. 50. 22.*

3. Wicked Men shall be bound up together in bundles, and cast into the Fire of Hell. So saith the Text, *Mat. 13. 30.* *In the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, gather ye together, first, the Tares, and bind them in bundles*

to burn them. And why in bundles? Will this
 be any ease to them in Torments? They are
 will want to say, Here, Neighbours Fare is good
 Fare: But it will be otherwise there, the sight
 of each other will increase their Torment,
 where they shall reflect upon their Guilt toge-
 ther, how they tempted others, and were
 tempted by others to sin; thou wast one In-
 strument to bring me into this Place of Tor-
 ment: O that I had never known thee! Now
 merry Companions will be torturing Com-
 pany; their sweet Meat must have sour Sauce.
 This, this is the dreadful consequence of our
 Grantick Frolicks. It is thought, that this was
 the reason why the Rich Man was loth his five
 Brethren should come to him in
 Hell; not for love to them (for *Euke 16. 28.*
 there's no such Charity in Hell)
 but Self-love, lest their presence should aggra-
 vate his Torments. Hence is *the*
gnashing of teeth also mentioned, for *Mat. 13. 50.*
 spleen and spight both against
 themselves, and against each other; as Commu-
 nion advanceth the Saints Glory above, so Com-
 pany of old Sinners aggravates the Wicked's
 misery in Hell.

4. It will greatly aggravate Wicked mens
 Torment, to consider, that this was their own
 doing: *Their destruction is of them-*
selves; they can challenge none *Hof. 13. 9.*
 but themselves, though they had
 many Incentives and Temptations: Neither
 the

the Devil nor Wicked men could ever put them to Hell against their wills: God saith *He wills not the death of a Sinner.* Jesus Christ expressed his earnest desire of their Salvation by his Death, the Spirit came with its loving motions and impulses, Godly Ministers, Christian Friends prayed for them, took pains with them to save them; so that our Lord himself saith, *Mat. 23. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy Children together even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings; and ye would not?* There was God's gathering time of Mercy, but that's past; now

Mat. 3. 12.

there's a gathering time of Wrath. When the Chaff must be burnt in unquenchable fire. They might have been happy, but would not.

Jonah 2. 8.

They observed lying vanities, and forsook their own mercies; now there's no remedy. They chose the thing wherein be delighted not, and now he will change their delusions, Isa. 66. 3. 4. Alas, poor Sinners choose the Devil's Drudgery here, and God gives them up into his hands, to be tormented for ever; and as Christ will gather up his Saints whom he purchased, so the Devil will gather up all his Slaves, not one shall escape him: the Wicked are gathered by Death to their

Acts 1. 25.

Master, and to their proper place as it's said of Judas, That he went to his own place, that's Hell; For the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the

Nation

Nations that forget God, Psal. 9. 17. O, what a vast Assembly will that be! Millions, Millions of Souls descend down into that Place of Torments. Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat, Mat. 7. 13. O tremble, lest you be found among this greater number of the Sons of men.

Remember, all Mankind have their Faces Hell-wards, when they are born; *The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lyes, Psal. 58. 3.*

There is none righteous, no, not one; we are altogether become unprofitable, *Rom. 3. 10, 11, 12.*

without a saving turn we are all marching Hell-ward, and must be gathered together, and, like Faggots, piled up in that Infernal Lake, but especially such as have improved the stock of Original Corruption in a course of Profane Swearing, Rioting, Drunkenness, mocking of Religion, ridiculing Preciseness, condemning the Righteous, justifying the Wicked: How can such as these expect to be gathered with the Saints in the other World, whom they cannot endure in this? Surely the Godly and Wicked go contrary ways, when they go off the Stage of this World into an Eternal state.

2. As Wicked, Graceless Persons state is sad and hopeless, so continuing, so also professed Christians, yea, real Saints are in some things too faulty, and blame-worthy.

I. Shall

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I. Shall

1. Shall there be a gathering together at last, then how unaccountable are those Distances, Animosities, and Heart-burnings among Christians? There is utterly a fault among us: How contrary is this to Christian Love, so often recommended by Christ and his Apostles? Yea, our Lord hath made it the Characteristical Note of *his Disciples, to love one another*, John 13.

35. It was wont to be said of the Primitive Christians by Heathens, See how they love one another. But alas, Brotherly Love doth not continue: It hath been declared, to the

scandal of our Noble Profession,

1 Cor. 1. 11. *That there are Contentions among us.*

Further, it hath been said, That where strictest Professors fall out, they are most implacable; Drunkards will sooner be Friends than these Puritans: God forbid it should be true; God forbid that there should

2 Cor. 12. 20. *be Debates, envying, wraths, strifes, back bitings, whisperings, tumults, swellings.* Alas, that such unbecoming Fruits

of the Flesh should be found among us! There hath been too much of this Evil Spirit; O, let us take heed, *lest if we bite and devour one another, we be not consumed one by another*, Gal. 5.

15. These are the Devil's Artillery, whereby he fights, and too often prevails to do abundance of mischief, and hinder much good;

For where envy and strife is, there

James 3. 16. *is confusion, and every evil work.*

How can you think of the Day
of

of meeting one another in Heaven with such peevish Spirits? Will you perpetuate your Quarrels into another World? Are you Children of Peace, that thus Quarrel? For shame lay aside your Differences, or lay aside your Profession of this Gospel of Peace.

2. If the Saints be gathered at last, why do they not keep close together in this World? What unaccountable Separations do men make from each other upon small Occasions? This is a Duty practiced by all the Saints in all Ages, the Primitive Christians continued steadfastly in the *Apostles doctrine and fellowship*, Acts 2. 42. As soon as Paul was converted, he assayed to *joyn himself to the Disciples*, and others *consorted with Paul and Barnabas*. The *Philippians were in the fellowship of the Gospel from the first day of their Conversion*. Like will to like: It's Natural for a Child of God to hold close Communion with his Father's Children: How comes it to pass then, that some that profess themselves Christians, keep at a distance? Alas, have you the same Name, Nature, and Divine Image, and do you not care for their Company? How will you like to live with them for ever in Heaven, that love not their Society on Earth? How comes it to pass that you keep off? It's possible some do it out of modesty, they are not worthy to associate with them; these are but few: Others out of Singularity, Retiredness,

tiredness, they can find none good enough to whom they think fit to vouchsafe intimate Familiarity. Others have a pique against such and such Christians, or against the whole Party, and most hold off from supine Negligence, Carelessness, and Oscitancy; most men are unconcerned about their Edification: How unwilling are some Christians to be drawn to Communion of Saints? If it be an Article in their Creed, 'tis no part of their Practice, as though they had never subscribed to it; yea, there are some, that were once forward for this Work of Christian Communion, that are now fallen off, like those *Hebrews* that believed, of whom the Apostle saith, *Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is*, Heb. 10. 25. The *Donatists* of old, and the *Sectaries* of late, have made dreadful Rens and Schisms in the Church; the more Holy Christians are, the more Catholick Spirits they have: They are most likely to be sensual, that needlessly *separate themselves*, yea, *not having the spirit*, Jude 19. however they may boast themselves to be more full of the Spirit than others they separate from. Well, Sirs, consider what you do, how you prejudice yourselves, weaken your Brethrens Hands, sadden their Hearts, yea, you weaken the Interest of Religion hereby: What, Friends, shall one Heaven hold you, and cannot one Church hold you? Do you look for comfort at Christ's second Coming among his Saints, and will you not

not keep by the foot-steps of the flock? The Lord awaken you.

3. Some Christians make nothing of offending the Saints of God, that they should not offend; that's a dreadful word, *Mat. 18. 6. Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the Sea.* I confess this is spoken of open and violent Persecutors, whom our Lord will banish among the pushing Goats: But even Christians are too apt to offend one another; sometimes by provoking words, sometimes by offensive carriages, doing that which (however it seem indifferent to us) yet thereby a Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak, *Rom. 14. 21.* Unadvised walking may hinder much good, occasion much evil, at least may make sad the hearts of those whose hearts God would not have made sad: With what comfort or confidence will you look in the Faces of those whom you have justly offended?

An eminent Divine saith, if it be my weakness, I have much ado to think but some shame with confusion will accompany me, when I first meet any there, that I have been unkind to, or wronged, or that will know my faults better than here they did, and that I shall ask them forgiveness, which will be soon granted, being forgiven

Mr. Baxter in a Letter before Mr. Burgess's Book of Christian Commemoration.

by Christ. However matters will go then, it becomes all the Saints to be very choice and chary of the Holiness and Comfort of their Fellow-members on Earth, and to say, with Paul, 1 Cor. 8. 13. *Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.* Happy are they that neither give Offence carelessly, nor take Offence causelessly.

4. Yet still there's a great (if not greater) fault, of good People, and that is, to be too familiar with Wicked Men, to comply too far with Sinners, to the dishonour of God, scandal of Religion, and wronging of our own Consciences. Paul writes, and 1 Cor. 5. 9. 11. *writes again, not to keep company with fornicators*; the word is very emphatical, [*συναισχυροῦσθαι*] not to be mingled with them by intimate familiarity, as streams of Water mix together; but Christians must be like Oyl, that will not mix with Water; especially scandalous Professors of the True Religion, if such be disorderly Persons, Idle, Busybodies, disobedient to the Word; sound close-walking Christians must *note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed*, 2 Thess. 3. 11. 14. Brand such an one as infamous, discover a strangeness in your Carriage to him, [*ἰνα ἐντραπή*] that he may turn into himself, and consider what may be the cause in him of this your alienation from him: Such a Recognition may become a means of his

his Repentance; whereas if you still smile upon him, as if you saw nothing amiss in him, you do but harden him in sin: Yet there's something worse in your sinful compliance, you contract Guilt to your own Souls, and are in danger to be infected, and so partake of their Sins, and of their Plagues. *Rev. 18. 4.* How often doth God call, *Come out from among them; and be ye separate, saith the Lord — What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them rather, Eph. 5. 11.* How often doth David bid Wicked Men depart from him? And if they will not be gone, he will flee from them as from a Pest-house: *Psal. 26. 4, 5. I have not sate with vain persons, neither will I go in with dissemblers. I have hated the Congregation of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked: And then prays, ver. 9. Gather not my soul with sinners.* Oh, Friends, tremble to be found among Wicked Men in the Gathering-day.

C H A P. IX.

*Examination of our Souls, whether we shall
be gathered with Saints.*

3 **A** Nothen Use is of Tryal, Whether we be the Persons that shall be gathered to Christ with the rest of his Saints in that Solemn Day of his Appearing.

1. Consider, you may know whether you be of that number yea or no ; assurance is possible, attainable ; God's Children have obtained it, 2 Cor. 5. 1. *For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* We can be well content to forego this tottering Cottage, because we are well assured of a Coelestial Palace ; there we shall lodge with God, Christ, Angels, and glorified Spirits for ever.

2. Nor is this Assurance only communicated by Divine Revelation, but may be obtained in the diligent use of God's appointed means, hearing the Word, Prayer, Meditation, exciting and exercising of Grace, holy Warfare, and Victory over Temptations, Corruptions, walking close with God, particularly by a Practical Syllogism, where the Word of God

is

is the Major, Conscience the Minor, the Spirit makes the Conclusion: Thus, such whose Eyes are opened that are turned from *darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, shall have an inheritance among them that are sanctified*, Acts 26. 18. Then Conscience brings in the Minor, I have found my Heart and Life thus changed by Conversion; then the holy Spirit brings in the Inference or Conclusion, therefore I do groundedly hope, I shall obtain the Inheritance of Glory with the rest of the Saints: This is called the witnessing of the Spirit *with our Spirits that we are the Children of God*, Rom. 8. 16.

3. Therefore it is the Duty of all Christians to endeavour after it, we are commanded to *give diligence to make our calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. We desire saith the Apostle, *that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the End*, Heb. 6. 11. Such as look not after Assurance conscientiously, render their spiritual Estate suspicious: For it is the Nature of Grace to put the Possessor forwards to Perfection: The sincere Christian will be *perfecting himself in the fear of God*, and press forward to enjoy more of God's Presence: *Let us (saith the Apostle) draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*, Heb. 19. 22.

4. And oh the advantage and benefit that God's Children have by a well-grounded Assurance of their Salvation, it will raise your

Hearts in praise of God, and transport your Spirits in love to and delight in him: This drops sweetness into all worldly Injoyments; it chears up the Heart in Sufferings, *Heb. 10. 34.* fortifies the Soul against Temptations; excites the Christian to all Acts of new Obedience; gives Contentment in every Condition: This strengthens against fears of Death, and is a certain prelude and fore-runner of Heaven: O happy Soul that can say God is my Father, Saints my elder Brothers, and I shall meet them all in Glory, and sing praises with them to God and the Lamb for evermore.

Quest. But how shall a Man know that he shall be one of those that shall be gathered together to Christ, in that Solemn day?

Ans. I desire you will faithfully Answer these Seven Questions.

1. Have you been gathered to Christ by converting Grace? *To him (i. e. to Shiloh) shall the gathering of the People be, Gen. 49. 10.* Hath the Spirit of God in the Word convinced you of your distance from God, prevailed with you to enter into Solemn covenant with him?

Alas, by nature we are as Sheep going astray, *Psal. 119. 176.* Prodigals in a far Country, have neither skill nor will to return to God, but Christ the good Shephard calleth *his own Sheep by name, and lea- deth them out, they know his voice and follow him, John 10. 34.* Formerly (saith the returning Sinner)

Sinner) I heard but the Voice of Man, now methinks I hear the Voice of God, rending my Heart, discovering those Secret-lusts, that no mortal can know of, the very Secrets of my Heart are made manifest; I must *fall down on my face and worship God and must report that God is there* (in such an Ordinance) of a truth, 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25. What concussions and shakings of Soul have you found to unsettle you from your carnal Peace and Security? Hath the Lord *bewed you by his Prophets, and slain you with the words of his mouth?* What convictions of your lost Condition? What tremblings after the Lord? When he roareth as a Lion? Are you of those that tremble at the Word of the Lord? Yet it doth not afright you from him, but to him: I can be safe nowhere but under the shadow of his Wings: Come *let us join our selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that shall not be forgotten*, Jer. 50. 5. I will tie this slippery Heart to the Lord, with the strongest and streightest Bonds: I will not only say it with my Mouth, but *subscribe it with my Hand, yea and swear my self to be the Lords, and his only*: Some indeed Swear by the Name of the Lord, but *not in truth, nor in righteousness*, but the sincere Christian is most afraid of Hypocrisy, longs after sincerity, approves his Heart

Hos. 6. 5.

Hos. 11. 10,
11.

Isa. 66. 5.

Isa. 44. 5.

Isa. 45. 23.
ch. 48. 1.
ch. 49. 22.

Heart to God, resolves to resort to his Standard; fight his Battles, and be on his Side for ever; Let Flesh and Blood and all the Devils in Hell say what they can to the contrary, is this your Peremptory resolution?

2. Have you separated from Sinners, 2 Cor. 6. 17. *Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you:*

ver. 14. 15. For, *what communion hath light with darkness?* As Man cannot carry their vain Companions to Heaven, so not into the Church-state: No

Rev. 21. 27. unclean thing or person can enter the Gates of this holy City:

ch. 22. 15. For without are Dogs: Saints may not deny civil Converse with

the worst of Men in Neighbourhood or near Relation, 1 Cor. 5. 10. But in two respects the Apostle denies Society with gross Sinners, 1st. Not too much or needless Familiarity with them; not to be mingled with them, as Water and Oil will not mix, Christians must not, will not be Hail-fellow with dissolute Persons:

2^{dly}. Especially with such as are pretended Christians, and bely their Profession by scandalous Actions; these of all others

2 Thes. 3. 14. we must keep at a distance from, as a piece of their Punishment to

bring them to Shame and so to Repentance: If you Act as Christians, you will let him see a strangeness in you towards him, *ut quæras ubi.*

So

So *possit prae pudore occultare*, that he may turn in-
 to himself by Self-reflection, recognize his
 Disorders, or seek where to hide himself: But
 that's not all, for a godly Person hath a kind of
 antipathy against wilful Sinners, and avoids
 them as afraid of being infected by them, as
Joseph was shy of his Mistress: And as *Solomon*
 adviseth, *Prov.* 58. 9. By familiar Converse
 you may encourage them in Sin, and prejudice
 your Selves: Hence all Pious Persons have been
 afraid to associate with Sinners, so *David*, *Psal.*
 26. 4. *I have not sat with vain Persons, neither*
will I go in with dissemblers: For, in their Com-
 pany I shall get either Guilt or Grief; if I
 Act as they, I shall be guilty; if not, I shall
 be grieved: The best is, to meddle as little as
 I can with them, for God's Honour, and my
 own Peace: I will resolve with Old *Jacob*,
Gen. 49. 6. *O my Soul come not into their Secret:*
I dare not touch the Rope, least I
hear the Bell: I will abstain from *1 Thes.* 5. 22.
the appearance of evil; and hate *Jude* 23.
the Garment spotted by the flesh.

3. Have you associated your Selves to them
 that fear God? Godly Persons were holy *Da-*
vid's intimate Friends, *Psalms* 16. 3. the Saints
 were in his Account the excellent in the Earth,
 in whom is all my delight: *Compa-*
nion am I to all them that fear thee: *Psal.* 119. 63.
 I have wise Senators, valiant Soul-
 diers, but what are these to me, if they be
 not truly Religious, one *Jonathan* is better then
 many

many *Joabs*, one *Hushai* better then a thousand *Achitophels*; I love them that fear God with a peculiar Love, yea though they should be severe upon me if I offend, I will not only patiently bear it, but thankfully own them as my

Benefactors: Let *the righteous*

Psal. 141. 5.

smite me, it shall be a kindness:

Prov. 27. 6.

Faithful are the wounds of a friend:

I will love *Nathan* the better whilst I live, for his Faithfulness: [*Sit anima mea piis*]

let my Soul be united to Saints: I will live with them on Earth with whom I

would sing Praises in Heaven: Communion of Saints, is not only an Article in my Creed, but

a main Point of Practice, yet next to Communion with God my highest Priviledge:

These, these will I converse familiarly with; I will confer with them about the things of God,

pray and praise God with them, sit down with these at the holy Supper, and walk hand in

hand with them in my journey Heaven-wards: There is an holy Union of all Saints, which

yet is not natural, or corporal, political nor yet personal, but yet it is Real, and this Uni-

on is either Mystical, as Members of the same mystical Body, *Eph.* 5. 30. or Ecclesiastical: These

Converts are said to be added to the Church, and have mutual external Fellowship, *Acts* 2.

41. 42. Thus *Paul* when converted assayed to joyn himself to the Disciples, *Acts* 9.

Acts 17. 4. 26. And others consorted with *Paul* and *Silas*, and indeed 'tis nat-

tural for a Child of God to desire, yea and delight

delight in the Society of the Saints; thence the Apostle mentions the Philip-
pians fellowship in the gospel, from Phil. 1. 5.
the first day until now mark it, it
 was early and permanent: A good Man
 knows not how to go to Heaven alone: They
 must go forth by the *foot-steps of*
the flock, and are like a *company of* Song. 1. 8, 6.
horses in Pharaohs chariot: So ami-
 able, profitable and pleasant is Christian Society.

4. Do you lay to Heart the scatterings of
 Christians? Zeph. 3. 18. *I will gather them that*
are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly who are of
thee, to whom the reproach of it was a burthen:
 This scattering is either by Persecution or Dis-
 sention, 1st. If Enemies prevail and break up
 the Saints solemn meetings, God's poor Chil-
 dren lay it deeply to Heart; hence such la-
 mentable complaints and expostulations of
 God's People, Psal. 143. 4. *Lift up thy feet unto*
the perpetual desolations even all that the enemy hath
done wickedly in the sanctuary, Isa. 64. 9.—12.
 This was one Ingredient of Judah's Lamentati-
 on, that *the ways of Zion mourn,* and God's Peo-
 ple did mourn with her, Lam. 1. 4.—7. Such
 sympathy speaks kindly bowels, and moves
 God's Heart, and possibly in this World, they
 may be gathered however in the other, Isa. 66.
 10. *Rejoyce ye with Jerusalem and be glad with*
her, all ye that love her, rejoyce for joy with her all
ye that mourn for her: Sions Friends shall partake
of Sions Comforts: 2^{dly}. Such as grieve for the
 Divisions

Divisions of the Church within her self, Judg. 5. 15, 16. *For the divisions of Reuben, there were great thoughts of heart, great searchings of heart:* O the sad Contentions and Animosities that have risen up in the Church in all Ages, and the pious and peaceable Members thereof have been grievously afflicted therewith! Sometimes upon Personal, sometimes Doctrinal differences have rent the Bowels thereof, and rent the Hearts of publick-uniting Spirits, and they have almost despaired of seeing an End of them in this World, till they arrive in the place where *Luther* and *Calvin* are made perfect Friends, and all the Saints shall be of one Mind; Mourners for these Breaches shall be perfectly cured and comforted, Isa. 51. 11. *Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head, they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.*

5. Do you follow the Army of Martyrs in bearing your Cross, and preparedness to suffer for Christ? [*hinc fitur ad astra*] This way have all the Saints gone to Heaven, this is the established, enacted Law of Heaven: *If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me, Mat. 16.*

Acts 14. 22.

24. *We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God:*

Heaven is taken by Storm, and the gracious Soul is resolved to go through Storms: For Persecution and [*Evangelii genius*] the common

mon

mon constant Lot of all the Saints:

All that will live godly in Christ Je- 2 Tim. 3. 12.

sus shall suffer persecution: Yea, but

the Christian is not appaled with nor ashamed of the Cross of Christ; nay, he takes pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, 2 Cor. 12. 10.

Nay, he glories in the Cross, and

in the marks of the Lord Jesus, as Gal. 6. 14. 17.

much as an Old Soldier in his

Wounds received in the Wars: As the poor

Woman in the Book of Martyrs thought it a

piece of Honour and Happiness, that her Foot

was put in the same Hole of the Stocks where-

in Mr. Philpot's had been before. So the Chri-

stian rejoiceth to follow that blessed Army of

Martyrs to Heaven, not meerly by an Apish

Imitation from a good Conceit

they have of them, but *having* 2 Cor. 4. 13.

the same spirit of Faith, they make

their Profession, and endure Opposition; what-

ever it cost, onwards he will, though he die in

the Conflict; he sees a Crown attending him,

and so gathers strength by every bout, yea, by

every foil, as it was said of Rome, [*Roma clā-*

dibus animosior,] that every Battel, yea, every

slaughter of Men made her more couragious.

So it is with the conflicting Soul,

none of these things move him, Acts 20. 24.

that startle others, but animate

him with more Courage in his Christian War-

fare and Voyage through this boisterous Sea to

the

the Haven of Rest: Is it thus with you?

6. Do you daily make Proficiency in Grace? Are you marching on in your Christian course, adding daily some Cubits to your Spiritual stature? There's no standing still in Heaven's Road, [*non progredi est regredi,*] not to go forward, is to go backward. Paul saith, *I press toward the mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 3. 14.

Ver. 11.

Nothing would serve him on this side Perfection: He longs after that pitch of Grace he shall attain to in the Resurrection. The sincere Christian grows brighter and better, as the shining

Prov. 4. 18.

Light, *that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*. Where there is Truth, there will be Growth. Grace is like a Grain of Mustard-Seed; the Christian never

2 Cor. 7. 1.

thinks he hath grown enough, he is still *perfecting Holiness in the fear of God*, getting Ground daily of the Body of Death. This is their Duty, this is their Property, this is what the Apostle earnestly prays for, *1 Thess. 3. 12, 13. And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one towards another, and towards all men, &c.* I would, saith

Eph 3. 8.

the Saint, be holier than the holiest Saint on Earth, but judge myself lesser than the least of all

Saints. O that I were perfectly free from Sin! O that my Blossoms of Grace were ripe Fruit!

O

O that I could increase with the increase of God ! Let my Faith *Col. 2. 19.* grow exceedingly to full assurance ; let my Love grow to delight in God, my Repentance be more Evangelical, my Hope more fixed, my Fear more filial, my Obedience more universal, and all my Graces more lively, and my whole Man more conformable to Christ, the perfect Pattern of Holiness. Oh that I could *go from strength to strength, till in Zion I appear before God. Psal. 84. 7.*

7. What blessed Instinct inclines you Heaven-wards ? Heavy things move downwards, light things upwards ; every thing moves towards its Center. The Church is compared to *pillars of Smoak, Cant. 3. 6.* still mounting towards its proper Element. So the Christian is *John 3. 3.*

[*ἀνωθεν γενομένῳ*] *born from above,* and naturally inclines to things above. Grace resembles God, it widens the Soul's Faculties, and makes it altogether unsatisfied with Sublunaries : Even an Heathen *Seneca* could say, [*major sum & ad majora natus,*] I am born to higher things than to these Trifles ; my thoughts are carried quite above visible Objects, Mortal things cannot fill an Immortal Soul, especially touch'd with a Coal from the Altar, and raiseth sparks upwards to the Fountain of Light and Love. Our Lord gives this as a certain [*τὸς μῆριον,* or] token of a Soul that is either

G

for

for this or for another World: *Mat. 6. 21. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* The workings of the Heart are an infallible demonstration of a Christian's state. Is the rational, habitual motion, and tendency of your Hearts God-wards, Heaven-wards? Have you a strong, impetuous motion and bent of Soul to things above? Are you best pleased when your Hearts are in a frame for God? Do you take it ill, and resent that with some regret and indignation that obstructs your Soul's motion? Have you a strong impulse Heaven-wards, by the restless motion of Desire, and by the acquiring affection of Delight? Never so well as when you are conversant about Heavenly Objects. It's also the blessed Apostle's Character of a Saint, *Col. 3. 7. If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above.* There, there is a Christian's Life, his Love, and De-

Isaiah 40.

light; thither he is mounting as on Eagles Wings, and is never satisfied till he be swallowed up in the Divine Embraces: He is glad of Communion of Saints below, more glad of Communion with God in his Ordinances, but still most restless till he be wrapt up in the full Enjoyment of God above. For our Lord hath said it, *Luke 17. 37. Wheresoever the body is, thither will the Eagles be gathered together.* The Saints are united to Christ by Faith, as Members to the Head, and have an innate Propensity to him, and cannot be satisfied without a full

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a full Enjoyment of him, and that will never be, till the Soul get above this drossy, reeling Earth into the Regions above. Is this your frame? Are these your aims? Are your motions Heaven-wards, though, alas, too often interrupted, to the grief of your hearts? Your Souls are now espoused to Christ your Husband, and you earnestly long for the compleat Nuptials, *That you may be presented to your Heavenly Husband as chaste Virgins.* 2 Cor. II. 2.

C H A P. X.

A Perswasion to all to seek after this blessed Gathering at last.

4. **U**SE of Exhortation: 1. To Sinners.
2. To Saints.

1. To Sinners: A word or two to those Souls that are yet in *the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity*; tyed with Chains to the Prince of Darknes, *led captive by him at his pleasure*. Suffer your selves to be gathered unto Christ; what would poor Ministers give that they might prevail with you? How doth our Lord spread his Arms to embrace you? After all your wandrings, and Extravagancies, the Father of the Prodigal would run towards the returning Prodigal, fall on your Neck, kiss you, and make you kindly welcom; and Godly Christians would not envy your Entertainment, but delight in your Society, as not diminishing but increasing their
Felicity. There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, saith our Lord; yea, *there's joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth*. Glad
 are

Acts 8. 23.

2 Tim, 2. 26.

Luke 15. 7. 10.

are the Saints of such Consorts, glad are the Holy Angels of such Babes to attend upon; glad would poor Ministers be if your Souls were savingly converted and gathered to Christ: But if you still stand out, you have neither part nor lot in this matter, but must be Exiles, banish'd and *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power*, 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9. As meanly as you think of God's Children now, it will be a doleful parting from them in the great Day: Now be wise for your precious Souls.

1. Yet there's a possibility that you may be converted and saved; *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*; to Morrow it may be past, and never return again. You are yet alive, many are past hope, past help, thousands are dead and damned since you deserved to be in Hell, you are yet Monuments of Mercy.

2. The Spirit is yet striving with you, poor Ministers are studying for you, pouring out their Souls to God for you, longing after you, crying out, Why will you die? Why will you refuse this blessed Call of God? Be it known to you, God will not always be affronted, *His spirit shall not always strive*. Gen. 6. 3.

3. If ever your Souls be converted and saved, your selves must be Instruments as well as God is the Efficient cause thereof; for God

works Morally, so as to preserve Men's nature and the principles thereof; if ever you repent the Work is your's, though the power to work is from God, *Phil. 2. 12, 13.*

Baxter's
Myth. Theol.
Part III. page
46.

[*omne opus humanum est virium nostrarum opus & vires nullæ sunt nobis nisi à deo libere donatæ*] saith a great Divine: The Duty is our's, the Grace is his: God is the efficient, Man the Agent.

4. Your work is then to fall down on your Knees, and beg of God a Spirit suited to the Grace of God, and fitted for this day of gathering; Lord, I am now going to hear thy

Acts 16. 14.

Word, oh come with power from on high, open my Heart as thou didst the Heart of *Lydia*: Melt my Heart like wax, then set thy

2 Cor. 10. 5.

stamp upon me: *Cast down my vain imaginations—and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*: Square my Soul to be a Temple of the holy

1 Pet. 2. 5.

Ghost: Put spiritual Life into my Soul, and let me be one of those lively Stones, built up a spiritual House with the rest of thy

Song 5. 4.

Saints: Put thy Hand in by the hole of the door of my heart, and make my bowels move towards thee: Let the power of thy Grace be such an hidden, prevailing, uncontrollable Efficacy as may win my Soul to thee: All I can do is nothing unless

less the Spirit prevail : If thou wilt work who can let it ? If thou work not, all I do is in vain
 O Lord let me not perish with the rest of the
Infidel World, gather not my soul
with sinners, nor my life with bloody *Psal. 26. 9,*
men, but in the midst of thy congre- *12.*
gation let me bless the Lord.

2. But the parties I have to deal with, more directly are Christians, real Saints, who are gathered to Christ, and hope to be gathered to him at last with the rest of God's People; such as these I will give these few Instructions to, and all Professors :

1. Be Sincere: Be really what you seem to be by Profession: It will be a dreadful disappointment to pass for Saints, and be found among them, and not be of them; for its said, Rom. 9. 6. *They are not all Israel, which are of Israel, i. e. they are not of the same Spirit that are of the stock of Israel, some Goats may be found among the Sheep till the separating day: Some may have a name to live and be dead: All's not Gold that glisters, Rev. 3. 1.*
 shining Lamps, and Oil in the
 Vessels, are different things: It will be a dreadful thing when the Master of the Feast comes to view his Guests, and finds one not having on a wedding Garment, and thus Expostulates with him, *Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment!* Alas he was speechless and cast into utter darkness: Oh what *weeping and gnashing of teeth!* *Mat. 22. 11, 12, 13.*

O take heed of a shew and semblance of Religion: Tremble least when you are weighed you be found wanting, least your

Rev. 3. 2.

Works be not perfect before God,

[*πληρομένα*] filled up with the

necessary Essentials that constitute a Christian.

Sirs, a day is coming when your inside will be

turned out, to the open view of all: When

God will bring to *light the hidden things of darkness* and make manifest the counsels of the heart,

Psal. 119. 80.

1 Cor. 4. 5. See then that your

Hearts be sound in God's Statutes

that you may not be ashamed: Be

Phil. 1. 10.

sincere and then you *will be with-*

out offence till the day of Christ: Be

upright in Heart and downright in Life: Keep

Conscience void of Offence: Walk with God,

and you shall rest with God.

2. Gather your selves together in solemn Ex-

ercises of Religion: Especially in cases of pub-

lick Calamity and common Danger, so God

calls to *Israel*, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your selves*

together, yea gather your selves together, O nation

not desired, before the decree bring forth: Be una-

nimous and harmonious in Fasting and Pray-

ing: How often doth God call

Joel. 1. 14.

his People of Old, *to sanctify a*

ch. 2. 16.

fast, call a solemn Assembly, gather

the Elders,—there's great reason

for it, all have sinned, all must be humbled,

all are concerned: Persons may be helpful one

to

to another, a threefold cord is not easily broken : God sometimes expects unanimous Votes, which *Eccl. 4. 9, -12.*

make a great sound in his Ears : Let Christians do as the Children of Israel and Judah, go together to God weeping and seeking the Lord their God, covenanting with God, as in *Jer. 50. 4, 5.* Yea in ordinary Duties of Prayer, Conference, Reading ; let them strengthen one anothers Hands in God : *Prowoke*

each other to love and to good works : Heb. 10. 24.

Sing God's praises together : Oh what an Emblem of Heaven is this Communion of Saints ! Many live sticks make a great blaze : Grapes put together ripen one another : Is Communion of Saints good in Heaven, and is it not good here ? Are not some Christians ignorant and want informing ? Are not some dead and want quickening ? Hard and want softening ? Wandring and want reducing ? Are not some staggering and want settling ? Are not some weak, and should not we lift up the hands that *Heb. 12. 12.*
hang down, and the feeble knees ?

Get together here as you hope to come together hereafter.

3. Agree lovingly : Let not Christians fall out by the way, that hope to meet in the End : Away with discords and divisions, if any occasions of Difference fall out (as its likely there will) rest not till you seek and obtain Reconciliation : If thou have any thing against thy Brother, be thou faithful in admonishing if it be

be his Fault, to bring him to Repentance, keep not Malice burning in thy Heart ; avenge not your selves, exprefs brotherly kindness to him :

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good, study Rom. 12. 18,—21. If thou remember that thy brother hath ought against thee leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift,

Mat. 5. 23, 24. God will rather tarry for his due then thou should'st neglect thy Duty ; if thou be conscious to thy self that he hath just reason to be offended with thee , humble thy self, confess thy Fault to God and Him ; if thou be conscious that thou hast done him wrong, go to him and know the reason of his Strangeness to thee, and endeavour to pacify him, but do not fall out with any Brother , but *live in*

peace, that the God of love and peace may be with you : Oh take heed of

Quarrels and Animosities ; study the Wisdom which is *from above,*

James 3. 17. that's first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated ; you must

agree in the End, now lovingly Agree, for shame of the World, for the credit of Religion , for your own Comfort live peaceably ; cut not asunder the Veins and Sinews of the Mystical Body of Christ, study *1 Cor. I. 10. Phil. 2. 1, 2.*

4. Travel over Sinners for their Conversion : Do your utmost, endeavour to bring in Souls to God, that there may be more at that great Day to be gathered together to Christ : This is your present

present Duty, this will be your future Comfort: This is Ministers proper Work, and every Christians Concern: I have heard of a private Christian that used to follow Persons to their Shops, Plows, and discoursed with them about Soul-affairs, and thereby was an instrument to convert forty Souls to Christ: O what an honour would this be, doubtless private Christians if Wise, Serious, and Zealous, might do much good this way, and yet keep their Places, Jude 22. 23. *Of some have compassion, making a difference, others save with fear, putting them out of the fire:* Alas Sirs, how can you find in your Hearts to see Relation or any miserable Sinner dropping into the Fire of Hell, and not speak one Word to stop them? O dreadful cruelty! Are you not some way accessary to that Man's death that's a going to cut his own Throat, and you neglect to lay hands on him? Consider this, and be not Merciless to Souls: Advise, admonish, rebuke, intreat them for Christ's sake, for their Souls sake to pity themselves, and not leap into the Pit of Destruction; who knows what good you may do, if you be but instrumental to convert one poor Sinner *from the error of his way, you save a soul from death, and shall bide a multitude of sins;* Jam. 5. 20. And oh what joy on both sides will there be at your next meeting before the Throne!

5. Moderately lament and profitably improve dead Christian Friends: They are gathered to Christ and the rest of their Brethren: They
are

are safely laid up out of danger, they would be loath to be back again in this sinful sorrowful World: You may lawfully lament your loss, but envy not your Friends gain: *Sorrow not even as others which have no hope,* 1 Thes. 4. 13.

As if they were lost, or as if you should never meet again, for the dead in Christ and survivors shall be ever with the Lord, 15, 17. it is but a short absence, there shall be a joyful meeting: A little recess, shall be attended with an everlasting converse: *David* would not mourn for his dead

Child, for saith he, *I shall go to him*

2 Sam. 12. 23.
ch. 18. 33.

but he shall not return to me, but he lamented sore for *Abjalon* whom he was never to see again with

comfort: Those that die in the Lord are not lost but laid up: Their Bodies sleep in Jesus, and, their Souls rest in the bosom of their dear

Lord: They are with him in Pa-

Luke 23. 28,
43.

radise and say, *weep not for us but weep for your selves:* Imitate our Example, worship the same God

as we do, live at the rate of Heaven, let your Affections be with ours, hold Communion with us: This I have treated of in my Book of *Heavenly Converse.*

6. Make ready to follow these crowned Saints: They are got above, we are below, they pray for the filling up of their Number, let us pray that we may be *made meet to be partakers of the inheritances of the Saints in light,* Col. 1. 12. The Language of Jesus Christ (and

all

all the Saints) is, *be ye therefore ready also*: Be dressing your selves *Luke 12. 40.*
 for that Marriage-day : *Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and have put on their fine linnen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of Saints, Rev. 19. 7, 8, 9. [δικαιοσυνη]* Righteousnesses both inherent and imputed : Both are necessary for their several Ends and Uses : Whether this refer to the Day of Antichrist's fall or at the Resurrection, its true in both : There's great and good things *which God hath prepared for them that love him, freedom from 1 Cor. 2. 9.*
 Sin, Sorrows, perfection of Peace and Joy, immediate Communion with God, fulness of Grace and eternal Happiness : Wherefore, *beloved seeing that you look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless, 2 Pet. 3. 14.* Watching, warring, wrestling, working, well-doing, waiting till your change come, with your Loins girt, your Lamps light, burning and shining with *Luke 12. 35.*
 Splendour, and you your selves like *v. 36.*
unto men that wait for your Lord.

7. Be longing for that blessed Day, when your Souls shall be gathered among them, with our blessed Lord ; Paul saith, *be desired to depart and be with Phil. 1. 23.*
 Christ, which is far better : Its good to be with Saints here, but its far better, infinitely better to be with them in Heaven,
 where

where the King makes the Court, and the Courtiers are all crowned Kings: Is there not great reason the Saints should cry out with *Monica*, *Austin's* Mother [*quid hic facio?*] What do I here? Or with *Calvin* [*usque quo Domine?*] How long Lord? Oh when shall my poor imprisoned Soul be set at liberty from this body of clay and this body of death? When shall I mount up above the Stars, into those Cœlestial Regions? Oh the groanings of my Soul under this body of death and distance from God:

Yea I groan earnestly desiring to be
 2 Cor. 5. 1, 2, clothed upon with an house which is
 3. from heaven: When will my dear

Lord break down these clay-walls, and break this cage and let this Soul fly up into the Heavens, where it shall be perfected?

How long shall I dwell in *Meshech*,
Psalms 120. 5. and sojourn in the tents of *Kedar*: I am weary of Sin, and distance from my dear Lord, most of my godly Friends are gone, when shall I follow after? Why is his

chariot so long in coming, why tarry the wheels of his Chariots: Make
Jude 5. 18. hast my beloved and be thou like to a

roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices: Why doth my Soul

thus linger and lag behind my old Companions? Such and such are gone with whom I took sweet counsel in familiar Conference about the things of God, and our heavenly Country; many with whom I have pray'd and
 praised

praised God, with whom I have sitten down at the Lord's Table ; now they are drinking this Wine new in my Father's Kingdom, and why am I left thus far behind, worshipping afar off? Lord come thou down to me or take me up to thee, reach out thy hand pluck me out of this

low Dungeon, and set me where thou hast promised, such as have *Mat. 19. 25.*

followed thee in the Regeneration, upon Thrones, yea thou hast promised *that such as overcome shall sit with thee in thy throne :* *Rev. 3. 21.*

The presentment is too high for such a worthless worm, such a dirty villain as I am, but thy promise is sure to be performed : I depend upon it, I long for such a day ; some, yea thousands have taken possession ; I am one of thy redeemed ones, thou hast given me the earnest of thy Spirit, and some foretastes and perelibrations of Glory : Oh for a full harvest ! I reach out my arms towards thee, and hope at last to enjoy thee *the spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, he*

Rev. 22. 17, 20 which testifieth these things saith surely I come quickly, my soul eccho's Amen, even so

come Lord Jesus.

C H A P. XI.

*Encouragement to God's Children from
the Saints gathering together in sun-
dry Cases.*

5. **T**HE last use is of Consolation, or Incouragement to the People of God, that there shall be such a blessed gathering together.

1. That the Saints of God that have lived in all Ages, shall then meet and know and enjoy each other with mutual Content. 'Tis worth observing, that *Plato* brings in *Socrato's* comforting himself with the hopes that upon his Removal hence, he should be with *Orpheus* and *Musæus's*, with *Hesiod* and *Homer*: Yea, he should greatly be pleased with the Society of *Palamedes* and *Ajax*: But oh how much more content shall translated Saints take in the Society of those Cœlestial Inhabitants, of whom they have so often read, and heard of with delight, when they shall say, there stands holy *Enoch* that walkt with God, and was translated Body and Soul to Heaven: There stands *Noah* that just and perfect Man, the Father and Founder of a New World: There stands *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, and Friend of

of God : There stands just *Lot*, wrestling *Jacob* : The beloved *Joseph* more glorious now than in *Pharaoh's* Court : There stands meek *Moses* the *Jews* Lawgiver, once King in *Jeshurun*, that conversed with God face to face : There stands *Aaron* the Saint of God far more glorious now than in his priestly Garments in the Holy of Holies : There appears holy *Lot*, patient *Job*, zealous *Josiah*, *David* the Man after God's own Heart : Behold a troop comes up of Old and New Testament Saints, all the Prophets, Apostles, Ministers, Martyrs, Confessours, and Saints in all Ages ; which will represent a splendid shew, next to the infinite God, and our glorious Redeemer :

If *Augustin* judged it a brave sight, and worth wishing for to see *Rome* Flourishing, hear *Paul* Preaching, and behold Christ in the Flesh, much more will it be a ravishing sight to behold our glorified Redeemer surrounded with myriads of blessed Souls : This will be a delectable sight.

Romam in flore Paulum in ore Christum in corpore.

2. Saints that have enjoyed sweet Communion together in this World, shall enjoy sweeter and perpetual Communion above ; they that have kept day's of Fasting and Prayer, day's of Thanksgiving and Conference, that have sitted under the same Preaching, have sung Psalms together, have sat down together at the holy Supper, and feasted upon the Fruits of Christ's meritorious Sacrifice, shall now drink

H

this

this Wine new with him, in his Fathers Kingdom: Oh what communication of Experiences, of what they met with in their Passage through this Wilderness into their Cœlestial Canaan: How will they eccho to each other and

say, *We sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my tast: It was sweet then,*

Song 2. 3.

it is sweeter now: O the peculiar Acts of distinguishing Grace! Why did God chuse us rather than others to be Objects of this transcendent Love! We were fed with Manna in the Wilderness, now we are come into the Land of Promise, we have royal dainties, and drink abundantly of these Rivers of Pleasures; and bath our Souls in this boundless Sea of satisfying Delights; then they will sing with a louder Eccho than ever, *Come, and bear all ye*

that fear God, and I will declare

Psalm 66. 16. what he hath done for my Soul:

I was with my dear Lord in such a corner, now I declare his Goodness in the height of Zion.

3. Saints that parted sorrowfully with their Relations by Death, now meet them again to part no more. Death drew a Cloud over our Natural and Christian Friends: They disappeared, and we saw them again no more; but now we are met again in a better place than in our Houses, or Temples made with hands. We once took mutual content in each other, but that was but a shadow, a faint resemblance of

of that we now enjoy; the Husband and Wife *were heirs together* 1 Pet. 3. 7. *of the grace of life*, now they are Possessors together of the fulness of that Grace in Glory. We prayed, wept, discoursed together: We loved each other in the Flesh, but now our spark is become a flame; we love one another at another rate. The Godly Child will say, This is my tender-hearted Mother, my prudent, pious Father, that shed many a Tear for me. The Parent shall say, This my Child cost me many times a sad heart, many a bitter groan, he is the Son of my Vows; then the Child of my Hopes, now the Child of my Joys; his miscarriages cost me dear, his happiness raiseth my Spirits; he caused me to make many an Errand to the Throne of Grace, he now raiseth my Spirit into an Extasie of Joy: My Prayers are fully heard, my Joy is fulfilled in the Enjoyment of God with my dear Relations.

4. Souls fully refined from the dregs of Passion and Corruption, shall then without such allays injoy each other: Alas, we cannot discourse together here, but some piece of Vanity interposeth it self: Our discourses are oft impertinent, sometimes unsavory, sometimes giving and often taking offence: Alas, what discords, distances, dissensions are there among Christians: Even *Paul* and *Barnabas* may part in a pet: Alas, what Animosities and Heart-burnings are to be found here in this lower

World even among the Saints ! That we may sadly sigh and say [*tantæne animis cælestibus ira*] how comes it to pass that such hellish sulphurous Flames should rise out of heavenly Hearts ! But now those Flames are quenched, now they all unite in an harmonious Melody, singing the Song of *Moses*, and of the Lamb, now they

are perfect, of good comfort, of one
2 Cor. 13. 11. mind, they live in peace, and the God of love and peace is with them, and

they are with God : They shall never quarrel more. O the delectable Melody of this Palm-bearing Company ! Far beyond the Musick of the Sphears : Not one jarring string in all that blessed Consort : They have left behind them all their cudgils at the entrance of this Temple of Peace : Their Hearts are centred in God, and their Loins are streight with each other : *Luther* and *Calvin* are there perfectly agreed, never to contend more.

5. Saints shall be perfectly drained from the Converse with vile Persons in this dirry World ! Here the godly and wicked are mixed : It is impossible to forbear some civil Converse with carnal Neighbours, for *then must*

1 Cor. 5. 10. we needs go out of the world : Even notorious Blasphemers, Idolaters, Covetous, that fret and vex the Hearts of the godly : But in Heaven there's none such : No unclean thing enters there : The godly Soul shall never be vexed with unruly Company more : There is a day when the Saints and none but

but Saints shall be gathered together: There shall be no more the Canaanite (or Hypocrite) in the house of the Lord Zecha. 14. 21. of hosts: Not a prophane Esau, or a scoffing Ishmael in that household of God, among all those innumerable Saints: These have left the mad World on Earth sinning, or in Hell suffering for ever.

6. Godly Ministers and their gracious Converts shall meet together with Joy: Oh what reciprocal Joy, and transcendent Satisfaction will they take in each other, *when*

both he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoyce together: John 4. 36.

O faith the glorified Saint, yonder is my spiritual Father, under whose Ministry I have sate with trembling many a time; by astonishing Convictions upon my Conscience, when the Law hath thundred wrath against me: The same hand hath closed the wound and applyed a plaister of a Gospel-promise to my bleeding Soul: Many melting, heart-searching Truths, have these Ears heard from that Mouth, that have come warm to my Heart: Blessed be God that ever I saw his Face or heard his Voice: The Minister shall be surprized with a transport of Joy when he shall see his spiritual Children, begot in the bonds of the Gospel, over whom he hath wept many a Tear, travelled with Cares and Fears, and for whom he hath put up many affectionate Prayers: Now he shall see, and say his Labour was not in

vain in the Lord; I must say of these, *what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming; for ye are our glory and joy,* 1 Theff. 2. 19, 20.

7. Christians that have been scattered by Persecution, shall now quietly meet and part no more: How will they with comfort reflect on the solemn Assemblies sorrowfully broken up by Officers and unruly Bailiffs, their Names taken, their Persons dragg'd before Magistrates, their Houses rifled, and themselves hurried to Prison; now those days are over and gone, no danger of Conventicles or unlawful Assemblies in that upper Region, they shall worship God on an Hill, in the Mountain of the height of *Israel*: They shall no more be persecuted by Murthering or scattering Acts, they shall now be out of date, they shall no more hear the Voice of the Oppressour, there have been many such days as those in the Apostles

times, great persecutions against the Church, *that they were all scattered abroad* through forreign Regi-

ons: But now the storms are blown over, the clouds scattered, and the glorified Saints shall never be broken up or disturbed by the Sons of Violence any more: They shall recount those by past troubles with Songs of Praise.

8. The Saints of God that have been confined to Prisons, shall be set at liberty and in joy sweet content together: The Lord made their very Prisons sweet by mutual Communi-

on, but Heaven will be sweeter: The imprisoned Bird never sings so sweetly in the Cage as at liberty: O blessed enlargement! Now they are delivered (with the rest of the Creation)

into the glorious liberty of the children of God: They walk abroad at

Rom. 8. 21.

liberty at another rate then ever:

How shall they with joy and triumph recount their wandring about in Deserts and Mountains, in

Heb. 11. 37, 38.

Dens and Caves of the Earth:

Sometimes thrust into dark and dirty Dungeons

with Felons and Malefactors, yea condemned,

tortured, executed, but now they have obtained

a better Resurrection: O happy deliverance!

These shall have their proper Mansions

in their Fathers House, and the Cœlestial Palace

will resound sweet Eccho's of their triumphant Praises,

they shall not now

with *Paul* and *Silas* sing in the

Acts 16. 24, 25.

Stocks, but above where they shall

be advanced together.

9. The Saints that have providentially parted one from another upon any occasion, shall

meet again and part no more: When *Paul* was

to be bound at *Jerusalem*, and the Disciples understood it,

they took on heavily, *Paul* said,

what mean ye to weep and to break my heart?

Their weeping breaks his Heart: But especially saith the

Text, they sorrowed most of all,

for the words that he spake, *that they*

Acts 21. 11. 13.

Acts 20. 38.

should

should see his face no more : And this is the Case of many Christian-friends , but the relief is, they shall see each others Faces again, and their Faces will shine as the Sun, and their Contentment shall be exceeding the bounds of any Capacity in this lower World : They parted but for a Season, that they

Philemon. 15. *should receive each other for ever,* when the gracious God hath received them into everlasting Habitations.

10. The Saints that divided and could not agree to walk together in one Church upon Earth, shall be perfectly reconciled above, and then shall mutually embrace each other : They shall all speak the same thing, and never have the least reflecting Speech or Thought against each other : Possibly in this World the Contention [or *Paroxysm*] betwixt a *Paul,* and *Barnabas* may be so sharp that

Acts 15. 39. *they may depart asunder one from another :* As all God's People are

necessarily scattered into distinct Societies , though uniting in Spirit in the bonds of Peace ; yet good Persons of different Perswasions, may in some cases refuse to hold Communion occasionally one with another (some being for greater Latitude, others for stricter Bonds, or being of different Principles in smaller Matters, or through Prejudice or Passion,) yet in Heaven they shall be all of one Mind and one Heart , and all Dissention and Division will be laid

laid aside ; O what perfect Love, sweet Harmony, and joyful Delight will there be in the Persons and Graces of each other ! There will be no saying then, I am of this Opinion, or of this Party, or a Member of this Church and not of another ; but they shall attain to be in the Unity of the Faith, and united Members of the Triumphant Church.

11. Christians that had their natural Infir-
mity, shall leave them behind them, and their
united Spirits shall be made perfect : How
rough-hewn Natures have some godly Souls ?
How unfociable are some that proves a great
Affliction to themselves and all about them,
still quarrellous and discontented, nothing pleas-
eth them, and sometimes they cannot help it,
though they strive and fight and pray against it,
it still recurs and returns, and breeds much vex-
ation ; but upon this blessed gathering toge-
ther, *the crooked shall be made
straight, and the rough places (and Isa. 40. 45.
spirits) plain, when the glory of the
Lord shall be revealed* : O happy day, when
there will be no envy or discontent, but the
Saints shall rejoyce in each others Graces and
Comfort as their own, and lie square to each
others Spirits : Though some Stars shall out-
shine others in luster and glory, yet every Ves-
sel shall be full both of Grace and Comfort,
and not a wry Look or peevish Word shall be
found there to all Eternity.

12. The Saints that here condoled themselves and each other in their Personal afflictions, shall leave their Sorrows behind them, and all the occasions and grounds thereof, and unanimously thank God for compleat Immunity from all, some are sick, some are pained, some are pinched with Poverty, others are tormented with wicked Children and bad Relations: Some have troubles of Conscience under darkness, hidings of God's Face, some assaulted with hellish Infections, Fatanical Temptations, some are deeply Melancholy, and under sad

Complaints: Now we are required to bear one anothers burthens:

Gal. 6. 2. And Paul saith, *who is weak and I am not weak? Who is offended and I burn not?* Grace in the Heart

commands sympathy with others; but that perfect State dischargeth all Compassion as well as Passion: They that mourned together shall rejoyce together, not a sigh or groan shall ever possess a glorified Spirit.

13. The Saints shall lay aside all difficult and self-denying Duties: There are many personal Duties that require some cost, and it becomes a Christian before hand to *fit*

Luke 14. 28. down and count the cost, to mortify some special Lusts, to maintain a strict watch over Heart and Life, to worship God in the Spirit, exercise every Grace, maintain constant Communion with God, these will cost a Soul much care and industry, and though

though these are sweet in managing to purpose, *for wisdoms ways are pleasantness*, yet because of the corruption of our Hearts, and avernessto any thing that's good, they become difficult, and then relative Duties are difficult, to discharge trust to Relations, Parents to Children, Masters to Servants, Christians one to another, mutual Inspection, Admonition, giving and taking Reproofs, faithfully, humbly: Christians find these Duties hard and grievous to flesh and blood: But the more Spiritual any Man grows, the more Easy they grow, the more Love is in our Hearts to God, the less are his *commandments grievous*: 1 John 5. 3. Now in Heaven Love will be perfected: And holy Souls will be in their Element while they are serving God and doing the works of that Place: But the more *you can sing in the ways of the Lord*, the more chearfully will *you sing in the height of Zion*. Psal. 138. 5. Jer. 31. 12.

14. The Saints that have attended Ordinances with many defects and imperfections will leave them all behind them, and attend the Lord without the least defect, distraction or imperfection: The best of God's Children have a weight hanging on them, and a *sin that too easily besets them*, and impedes their Motion and obstructs their Ascent upwards: But these shackles shall be shak'd off with the Body, never a wandring

wandering Thought more to all Eternity : Here

Heb. 12. 12. we weaken the hands one of another , by our hands falling down and our feeble knees, bodily infirmities oft render the best Services wearisom, because the holiest Saints have but a Measure of Affection, hence it was that Three of Christ's choicest Disciples slept while Jesus was in his Agony, for though the *spirit was*

Mat. 26. 36,-- willing yet the *flesh was weak* : Alas
41. *Aaron and Hnr* must hold up *Moses* hands here, the best at some

seasons may be out of frame for Duty ; but in Heaven the Saints shall join hearts and hands without weariness or distraction in singing the high Praises of God in that heavenly Quire , and none shall fail his Fellow, or fall short of Duty.

15. Saints of the meanest stature and standing here shall be complet, and commence the highest degree of Grace in Glory : I say, not that all the Saints shall have equal Degrees of Glory ; the Text saith, that at the

1 Cor. 15. 41, Resurrection, *one star differeth*
42. *from another star in glory* : Its true all these heavenly luminaries shall

be perfectly joined in one constellation : But good Divines think, that as there will be Degrees of Torments in Hell, so of Joys in Heaven : As the Vessels are larger to contain more, or as Men have honoured God more here below, yet the meanest Saint will be top full of glory :

For

For they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many unto righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever, Dan. 12.

3. Weak Christians shall no more complain of Defects, but *he that is feeble in that*

day shall be as David, and the house Zech. 12. 8.

of David as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them: There will

no more be thence an infant of days: Isa. 63. 20.

The meanest Christian will in some respects be equal with the

Angels in heaven. Children in Mat. 22. 30.

Grace shall be grown up to be

perfect Men, to the measure of the Eph. 4. 13.

stature of the fulness of Christ.

16. Saints at that day shall be raised above the revilings, calumnies, and slanders of a malicious World, and be advanced to the highest Honour: In this World every one can throw dirt on God's Children, and account them the vilest of Men, not worthy to live upon Earth, and cry as they against Paul, away

with such a fellow from the earth for Acts 22. 22.

it is not fit that he should live: But

what saith God of such: Of whom

the world was not worthy: No Heb. 11. 38.

Nicknames shall follow them to

Heaven, they shall not be there called Puritans,

Fanaticks, Schismaticks, Fools, nay, possibly

they shall be honoured among Men when dead

and raised to glory: *The memory of*

the just is blessed: The godly a. Prov. 10. 7, 14.

bove

bove shall honour them, though sometimes they thought and spoke slightly of them, nay, the wicked and damned in Hell shall esteem honourably of them, as the Rich Man that thought (once Poor) *Lazarus* a fit Embassador to send to his Rich Brethren on Earth, *Luke* 16. 28. yea it may be wretched Hypocrites on Earth will build the

Mat. 23. 29. *tombs of deceased prophets, and garnish the sepulchers of the righteous,*

in honour to them, whom they or such as they were, did once abuse and revile on Earth, they will call the dead Saints and canonize them, whenas they miscall such as they, are Hypocrites and no better then Devils: God oft turns the Scales and rolls away the Reproach of all his Servants.

17. Saints that have exercised Charity and Hospitality, and such as received their Bounty, shall embrace each other with mutual Alacrity: Our Lord affirms it, *That whosoever gives but a cup of cold water (if he hath not a fire to warm it) to a little one in the name of a disciple (though he may be mistaken) verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward,* *Mat.* 10. 42. O will the poor Beggar say, there's my loving Benefactor, the Debtor will there

own his Creditor *that forgave him all when he had nothing to pay;* *Mat.* 18. 26, 27. well saith the Free-hearted debtor, I do not repent it, since I

am so richly rewarded, this Recompence is above

bove my expectations, and contrary to my deserts : Strange that I should receive so much for laying out so little, this is above *Isaac's* reaping an hundred Fold : How comfortable will that Language of our Lord be, when he shall say as in Mat. 25. 34,—40. *Come ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you, &c.* Behold my Deputies, in relieving of whom you relieved me, I took it as done to my Person what you did to my Members, and you shall be glorified together.

18. Saints that have wanted many things in this World, when they meet above shall want nothing : In this World the Body is full of Wants, we want necessaries to supply Nature, we want food to nourish us, cloaths to cover us, physick to cure us, arrows to defend us, sleep to refresh us, yet these but supply particular wants, and Men ordinarily have dependance one upon another for Supplies : But when God's Children get above, yet though they shall have sweet Communion with each other, yet their Happiness chiefly depends on the Vision and Fruition of God :

With him is the fountain of life, in his light they see light, in his presence is fulness of joy : The Sun

Psal. 36. 9.

Psal. 16. 11.

doth dart its Beams through the whole Universe : God's Presence (not Saints) makes Heaven : The King makes the Court not Courtiers : Nothing can satisfy the capacious Soul but
God :

God : *I shall be satisfied*, saith David, when I awake with thy likeness : That and nothing else gives content : Angels, and glorified Spirits, as Creatures must say, it is not in me to satisfy you : God alone can : Now and never till now the Soul saith, I have enough, I need no more : I have not only tasted but drunk deep of this River of Pleasures, yea bathed my Soul in this blessed Ocean of Delights : Nor do I surfeit upon these, but fresh Springs of joy yield me perpetual contentment.

19. All Saints pass through the valley of the shadow of Death to that Glory : None exempted but *Enock* and *Elias*, and those that shall be found alive at the last day : It is no strange thing, *For it is appointed to Men once to die* : It is the common Lot of Mankind, even the best Men : The Sting of Death is gone, its but a Trap-door to let us into Heaven : Thousands are gone before us, they are not lost but laid up : We shall meet them again : O who would be afraid of Death when Jesus Christ hath purchased the Grave for us ? Well may a graceless Soul be afraid to die, because he knows not what Company he shall converse with in the other World, but may fare with Devils and damned Souls, but the *righteous* hath hope in his death, and sees Jesus Christ standing with a Crown on his Head and another in his Hand, saying,
Be

Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life: Why should we then fear this King of Terrours that's disarmed, it may hiss, but cannot sting us: It may kill us, but cannot hurt us: See yonder glorified Assembly of the Spirits of Just Men made perfect have conquered Death, and are set upon triumphant Thrones.

Rev. 2. 10.

1 Cor. 15. 56,
57.

20. This blessed Society of departed Souls, shall continue through the Ages of Eternity: In this World they met and parted again, there was many intermissions in their sweet Communion: But now they shall for ever dwell in the House of the Lord,

and sing praises to the lamb for evermore: Such as overcome shall be pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out: They shall never be banished out of this heavenly Paradise: This word ever, evermore, everlasting, puts new Life into the glorious Songs of Praise, and daily revives their Spirits: After ten thousands of Millions of Ages shall the Joy be as fresh as at their first Entrance:

Rev. 3. 12.

That River is still running, in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore:

Psal. 16. 11.

Mortality is writ upon all Sublunaries: Eternity puts an Accent upon Spirituals: There shall be no night there [no Clouds, no Eclipses of that Glory,]

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Rev. 3. 12.

Psal. 16. 11.

Rev. 22. 5.

for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever : It is recorded of *Diogenes*, that when he saw his three Son's crowned in one day at the *Olympick Games* as Victors, died away while he was embracing them for joy : But though the Saints shall be in a continual Extacy and transport of Joy, in beholding their Children in Christ, and their godly Christian-Friends, yet their Heart-strings shall not break, but be enlarged with comfort, and perpetuated for evermore.

Oh what a day will that be, when all the Son's of the Second *Adam* shall meet together, so many pure Spirits defecated from the sordid dregs of Sin and Suffering shall join their Harmonious Musick and Melody in praising our dear Lord, whose glorious Perfections we could never extoll ! What a brave Quire will that make ! Not a discordant String among them all : But as one Eye moves the other rolls, when one String is struck the other sounds, such a blending sympathy will there be of well-tuned Praises in that heavenly Chorus : *Ignatius* thinks the Sun Moon and Stars, made a Quire about the Star that appeared at Christ's Incarnation ; oh then what an Halcyon-day

will that be, *when the morning stars shall sing together, and the son's of God shall shout for joy :* O what

an Harmonious Harmony, in perfect Symphony ! What mutual Love and Delight in each other ! Yea they shall Love one another the better

better for the perfect Love they have to God :
And bathing their Souls in that fathomless Ocean of divine Love.

Its true, the infinite God is ultimately and objectively the Saints proper delight both here and in Heaven , but glorified Bodies united to these blessed Souls , and the blissful Society of Angels and Saints, will be no small accessories of the Saints Happiness : As there will be no Hypocrite there to cool their Charity, so there will not be missing the meanest Member of Christ : The weak Christian that cryed out *my lameness*, *my lameness*, shall then be strong : The dark Soul that rarely got a glimpse of God, or a sealing of the Spirit , shall walk for ever in the light of God's countenance: The grieved Saint shall be now in an Extacy of Joy : Not a gracious Soul shall be missing, not the least Grace wanting, not a Duty lost , all secret Prayers , Tears , Groans , shall come to light and be rewarded, *Psal. 56. 8.* their Tears were bottled, their Prayers bookt, and now shall be produced: Not an Act of Charity, though the Left-hand knew not what the Right-hand did (much less others) but it shall be brought to light before Angels and Men , with high Approbation and Commendation.

Oh who would not be preparing for such a Day ? Who would not long for it , breath after it , and freely welcom it ? Let all

the Children of the *bride-chamber*
Luke 12. 35. make themselves ready, let your loins
be girded about and your lights bur-
ning : Be waking and watchful, attend his
 Motions, be glad of his Approaches, and glad-
 ly welcom the Bridegrooms coming with all
 his holy Angels and glorified Spirits, descend-
 ing in the Clouds to fetch you home into those
 Coelestial Mansions to be for ever with the Lord:
 Be not afraid, when he saith, surely I come
 quickly, let the redeemed of the Lord eccho,
Amen, even so come Lord Jesus, *Amen*, so be it.

F I N I S.

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